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ABSTRACT

Ideas for schools to support tolerance and celebrate student diversity are presented in this volume of reprinted articles. Titles include: (1) "One of Us, One of Them: Lessons in Diversity for a School Psychologist" (M. M. Chittooran); (2) "The Tolerance-in-Action Campaign" (H. M. Knoff); (3) "Immigrant Parents and the School" (R. Rhodes, D. Paez); (4) "Immigrant Teenagers: Helping Them Adjust to Their First Year" (B. Pilon); (5) "Adolescentes Imigrantes: Ayudandoles a Acomodarse en el Primer Ano" (B. Pilon); (6) "Limited English Proficiency" (D. K. Wilen); (7) "Perspectives on Inclusion: Listening to the Voices of Experience" (M. Herrera-Graf); (8) "Literature Circles: A Parent Guide to Teach African-American History" (D. Crockett); (9) "Biracial Children" (D. Wright); (10) "Multicultural Education: Current Status and Future Directions" (C. W. Burns et al.); (11) "Around the Freedom Table: Black and Jewish Youths Share a Heritage of Liberation" (E. Yellin); (12) "Enhancing the Communication Skills of Newly-Arrived Asian American Students" (L. L. Cheng); (13) "Supporting the Student in the Sexual Minority: Thriving in a Heterosexist School" (J. L. Van Ryswyk); (14) "Gay Families with Children" (C. Asprodites); (15) "Gender Equity Day: A Role for School Psychologists" (K. P. Dwyer); (16) "An Anti-Bias Approach to Early Childhood Education" (A. L. Boyd); (17) "Working with Native American Students: Guidelines for Special Educators" (A. Anderson, A. Canter); (18) "Tolerance and Diversity: Resources for Parents, Educators and Students" (D. Crockett); (19) "NASP Resources." (EMK)

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

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Pathways to Tolerance Student Diversity

Edited by
Dorothy Daugherty and Victoria Stanhope

This is the second publication of the NASP National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families. We would very much appreciate your suggestions for future publications.

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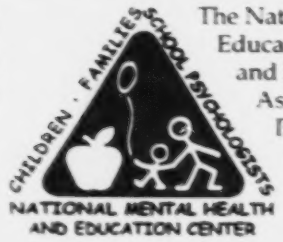
National Association of School Psychologists
4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814
Voice: 301-657-0270 • TDD: 301-657-4155 • FAX: 301-657-0275

NASP Mission Statement

The mission of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for all children and youth by implementing research-based, effective programs that prevent problems, enhance independence, and promote optimal learning. This is accomplished through state-of-the-art research and training, advocacy, ongoing program evaluation, and caring professional service.



The National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families of the National Association of School Psychologists is an information and action network to foster best practices in education and mental health for children and families—building upon strengths, understanding diversity, and supporting families.

The primary goal of the National Mental Health and Education Center is to provide leadership to address the critical issues that affect education and improve the outcomes for children and their families. The problems of school failure, classroom disruptions, violence, and drug abuse have actually increased during each decade over the past 30 years. They place a heavy burden upon families, children, schools, and communities. At the same time, decision-makers are raising standards for graduation—often without concurrently improving instruction, classroom management, school climate, or anticipating how this affects children and families.

The National Mental Health and Education Center works to provide support for children and families and improve the professional training and practices of school psychologists and pupil service providers. It is dedicated to ensuring children receive the optimum services in their schools and communities.

For more information on the National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families contact Victoria Stanhope at:

National Association of School Psychologists
4340 East West Highway, Suite 402
Bethesda, MD 20814

e-mail: vstanhope@naspweb.org

or visit our web page at:
www.naspweb.org/center.html

Pathways to Tolerance Student Diversity

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Introduction

Overview

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) believes that racism, prejudice, and discrimination are harmful to children and youth because they can have a profoundly negative impact on school achievement, self-esteem, personal growth, and ultimately the welfare of all American society. Children must learn tolerance and cooperation , and this learning must begin at an early age. Over the years, NASP has addressed tolerance issues through NASP publications, convention offerings, and professional development activities. Despite progress, there is still much to be done.

Tolerance and valuing differences based on culture, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, socioeconomic status, or other circumstances remain an elusive goal in our schools, homes, and communities. These issues present unique challenges and opportunities as the 21st century rapidly approaches.

Definition

The Random House Dictionary defines tolerance as, "a fair and objective attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, or the like differ from one's own; freedom from bigotry." A related but more humane definition is offered by Sara Bullard (1996) of the Southern Poverty Law Center, who defines tolerance as "a way of thinking, feeling, and acting that gives us peace in our individuality, respect for those unlike us, the wisdom to discern humane values and the courage to act upon them." Bullard believes that tolerance in its positive sense is the most appropriate single word the English language offers that embraces the broad range of skills we need to live together peacefully (p 16).

Perspectives

What can schools do to encourage the ideals and skills needed to support tolerance and to ensure that student diversity is recognized, respected and celebrated?

Helping schools meet the educational and psychological needs of America's increasingly diverse student population is an important role for school psychologists. School psychologists in collaboration with other professionals who work in school settings, along with parents and community groups, can develop classroom climates that are sensitive and inclusive, help promote the uniqueness of each individual, recognize diversity as a strength to be valued and respected, affirm the inherent worth of all human beings, model personal and cultural respect, and work consistently to interrupt bias whenever and wherever it occurs. School psychologist Mary Chittooran says, "It is in knowing how we are different from others that we learn that we are similar; it is in understanding our separateness that we appreciate our commonalities. My ultimate hope is that differences will unite us and that diversity becomes an occasion for celebration, not for condemnation."

This publication features articles mostly from the *Communiqué*, the NASP newspaper, on such topics as understanding culturally and linguistically different children and their families, immigrant parents and the schools, gender equity, sexual minority youth, perspectives on inclusion for disabilities, and more. The publication is ideal for increasing the diversity competence among school psychologists, administrators, teachers, parents and other professionals, as well as, to help students see diversity in its broadest sense as an expression of the American experience. We hope that at least one of the articles in this publication will influence your thinking and actions.

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Bullard, Sara (1996) *Teaching Tolerance*, Doubleday, New York, New York.

Chittooran, Mary M. "One of Them, One of Us: Lessons in Diversity for a School Psychologist", NASP *Communiqué*, November 1997, Volume 26, No. 8, p. 10.

Position Statement: Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination. Adopted by the NASP Delegate Assembly, April 1993.

Introduction by Dorothy Daugherty, NASP Professional Relations Associate.

One of Us, One of Them: Lessons in Diversity for a School Psychologist

by Mary M. Chittooran

In a recent article in the *Communiqué*, Henning-Stout (1996) addresses the issue of diversity as it informs her actions as a school psychologist. Henning-Stout's invitation to other school psychologists to tell their stories has prompted me to share part of mine, the part that deals with the awareness of being different and how that knowledge has influenced my actions in both the personal and professional arenas.

I am a school psychologist, presently a trainer at a small university in the Southeastern United States, and the coordinator of a campus-based clinic for individuals with learning and behavior problems. I am also East Indian; I speak English with an accent that is identifiably Indian but is faintly reminiscent of other places I have made my home — Scotland, Canada and the American South. I spent the first seventeen years of my life in India, attending the best "English-medium" schools, vacationing abroad and generally living a life of thoughtless comfort among a people who were mired in poverty. It was not until 1970, when I moved with my family to Washington, DC, that I began to achieve the slowly growing realization that I was different from those around me.

Learning About Being Different

Learning about being different occurred in three distinct ways. The first of these was through a collection of statements made by strangers, in whose words I heard — perhaps for the first time — an undisguised hostility that was occasioned simply by the fact that I was not one of them. I remember calling about a townhouse rental and being welcomed to take a look at the place. When we arrived ten minutes later, we were informed that the place had just been rented. I remember joining a group of teachers sitting at a cafeteria table, seeing them look at me, say something to each other, and then get up and move away. I can see the unemployed parent of an acting-out teenager who refused to talk with me because "you people took my job, now you want my time too?" I still hear the bitterness in the voice of a man who, realizing that we were both applying for the same faculty position, said, "Some of us don't *need* qualifications, just show them the color of your skin." Incidents like these left a wash of pain in their wake, and not a little anger that these strangers — who knew nothing about me — dared to judge me.

The second group of incidents was similar to the first in that it reflected prejudice, but was different in that it involved people I regarded as friends. I remember being introduced to a group of school psychologists with the statement, "She's not one of us but you wouldn't think it to know her." Another day, there was another introduction: "Rina's from India, but she's great!" A colleague applauded my success with children in a rural school system in Mississippi, despite the fact that I was "one of them furriners (sic), no offense." Expounding on a burning issue to a colleague, I asked for his opinion, only to be told "Oh, I never listen to what you say, I was just thinking how pretty you make English sound." I remember being passed over for identification as a minority because the well-meaning individual said, "I just never think of you as one of them, Rina, I always think of you as one of us." Seemingly innocuous remarks, all of them masquerading as compliments, underlining a distance between us that I hadn't known existed, and demonstrating the kind of insidious discrimination that takes one by surprise.

The third group of incidents has also been about noticing the differences but includes comments made by people who are accepting of differences and simply seek to understand them. There are the people who speak very loudly, very slowly and very distinctly, apparently under the impression that because I am foreign, I am also hard of hearing. There was the six-year-old (accompanied by his horribly embarrassed mother) who licked my arm to see if I "tasted like chocolate." There was the teenager who asked me, quite seriously, "How come your tongue's pink?" assuming, I imagine, that if one's skin was brown, one's tongue must be an exact match. I remember with affection the child who proudly gave me a picture of an alien creature he had drawn, one with a head placed slightly to the left of center, an eye in the middle of its forehead, and spiky green hair, and told me, "I thought you would like him because he's from another country just like you, Miss Rina." (I suppose he thought that India was inhabited by other, similarly odd creatures.)

Also in this category were innocent questions that were clearly prompted by a genuine desire to learn about my culture. I found these questions irresistible and would respond with typical teenage thoughtlessness. For example, "Was it expensive to feed your elephants?" ("No, we would just let them out in the garden to graze.") "Was it hard to adjust to sleeping in *beds*?" ("Yes, most of us are so poor we have to sleep leaning up against walls.") "Was it weird wearing our clothes for the first time?" ("Yes, it's so warm there that most Indians simply walk around with nothing on.") "You've only been here two months? How do you figure out what we're saying?" ("I lip-read with astonishing efficiency.") My answers were cruel, in

retrospect, because Americans are among the most friendly and open people in the world, and none of these well-intentioned people deserved my misguided attempts at humor.

I remember one moment with stunning clarity, when I watched a sea of brown faces on a program about India on the Discovery Channel, and realized that, as long as I lived in this country, I would never have that sense of mingling and oneness that those people on the TV screen seemed to have. I thought about the comfort of being able to blend into the crowd, never having to stand out because I was different from the others. However, I made my choice to stay in this country. My life is here and almost everyone and everything I love is here. But every once in a while, I think longingly back to that surging mass of Indians, and wonder. By staying on in this country, I am accepting the fact that my children will also have to make their own reality out of being different, just as I have and continue to do. Their task may be easier because they have spent almost all their lives in the U.S. and have known no other way of life. I think of my daughter, who at the age of 8 cried, "Don't they know that I just look different from them, I'm not different *inside*!" She is now, at the age of 14, proud of her heritage, an Indian, born in Canada, raised in America, feet straddling three cultures. She retains a vision of herself as "different, but in a good way" because she is part of a rich cultural heritage. My 11-year-old son, born in Oklahoma, looks just as Indian as we all do, but has not encountered the kinds of hurtful experiences she has, perhaps because he is a male, perhaps because his days are a busy round of school, soccer and video games, or perhaps because he refuses to get into these kinds of discussions and is satisfied, simply, with being.

Finding Commonalities

And yet, despite almost daily reminders of our differences, there are also frequent reminders of our commonalities, things that make us more alike than different. For example, there was the young mother looking on in amazement while I played an Indian version of patty-cake with her baby, who said, "It's amazing how we both play patty-cake, you in Indian, and me in English." A third grade class sitting open-mouthed, while I demonstrated how to wear our Indian national garment, the *sari*. Inviting their questions, only to be asked, "How do you pee in a *sari*?" or in other words, how do you do the common things, the things that we do? A young boy in Mississippi who realized that the game of jacks he played and the Indian game of "Five Stones," played with five smooth, flat pebbles that one picked up on a roadside, were really the same game. The teacher from Louisiana who realized that my Indian recipe for baked bananas was identical to hers. A group of school psychologists from the South participating with me in a values clarification exercise, and discovering that we had all placed God first, our families second and our careers last. I remember the little blue-eyed blonde girl who hugged me and said, "You don't *look* like my mama but you feel just like her."

I remember the Caucasians who told me secrets about the African-Americans they worked with, because I, despite my brown skin, was "not like *them*." I remember African-Americans who saw in me a kindred spirit because of the color of my skin. I remember Hispanic parents who recognized similarities between their patterns of child-rearing and mine. In some ways, I stood in a place that was outside these cultures and yet in a place that was within them. I was an outsider as well as an insider, belonging nowhere and belonging everywhere. This status carried privilege but it also carried its attendant problems.

There are other examples, in other arenas of my life, that I have not addressed. They too have contributed to my understanding of what it means to be different, with differences that are not founded so much in education, finances and place of residence as they are in our values, dreams and priorities. However, if you look and listen closely, you will find that I am not all *that* different, that I am more like you than unlike you. Being different has not stopped me from thinking, dreaming and writing in your language, from testing children, from consulting with parents and teachers, from counseling teenagers, from setting up interventions in classrooms, from doing all that you do and sometimes more. Like you, I contribute to the good in this world just as I contribute to the bad, dread having to do my taxes and play my part in giving the world its next generation of children.

Lessons in Diversity

Learning about being different has taught me that being different is not that easy, but that the responsibility to adapt, to extend a hand, goes both ways. I cannot expect others to make allowances for me simply because I am a foreigner; at the same time, I cannot become one of you if I am not given the freedom to do so. As I have grown older, I have learned of the responsibility I bear, that of informing the uninitiated and of doing so gently and with understanding. My experience has taught me that true friendship knows no color but that ignorance comes in many colors. It has taught me that the human spirit is capable of both beauty and pettiness. It has taught me that prejudice and discrimination are often founded on fear of the unknown, and that with familiarity comes a corresponding reduction in that fear and a growing willingness to reach out to others. It has taught me that we are all enriched when we value uniqueness rather than decry it.

I think that the greatest lesson I can teach others about being different is simply to be myself. Then others can see that despite the differences, I laugh and I cry, I love and I hate, I laugh at the same jokes, eat

many of the same foods, and drink many of the same drinks. And if Indian custom leads me to expect my children's American friends to address me with a respectful "Auntie" and keeps me from stepping on a book because it contains knowledge, I am not averse to sharing a pizza and beer with you on occasion. Although I can eat rice and curry with my fingers when I am with other Indians, I am just as comfortable using silverware; I understand the words of popular Indian film-songs, but I also enjoy Chopin's nocturnes.

The business of school psychology lies in dealing with individual differences and learning about being different has served me well as a school psychologist. Being different has made me more accepting of others who are different from the norm – those whose disabilities, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, language or regional/geographic origin set them apart from others. I understand that they, like me, may have had to deal with pain, hostility and shame. When I work with children, I teach them to rejoice in their uniqueness and to be proud of the differences that make them special. I try to show them that a smile and a sense of humor are powerful weapons in the struggle for acceptance. I have learned, when I deal with parents and teachers, to emphasize the commonalities between us, rather than comment on our differences – I'm a woman, I'm a mother, I'm a wife, I had the same thing happen to me once, I know how that feels.

Henning-Stout (1996) talks about the balance she has achieved in knowing the place and time that is hers to fill, the part she plays in holding together "the arch of being." I think about my part in the building of that arch and of the other people – both like and unlike me, those who are one of us, those who are one of them – without whom my actions would have no meaning. I expect that this story will resonate within some of you who have shared experiences that differ from mine only in the details. I also expect that this story will help some of you see the strangers among you in a different light. For we are all different from each other; it is the degree to which we are different that separates us. It is in knowing how we are different from others that we learn how we are similar; it is in understanding our separateness that we appreciate our commonalities. My ultimate hope is that it is these differences that will unite us and that diversity in our profession becomes an occasion for celebration, not for condemnation.

Reference

Henning-Stout, M. (1996, February). Lessons in balance for a parent who is also a school psychologist. *Communiqué*, 24 (5), 34-35.

Mary M. (Rina) Chittooran, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of School Psychology and Special Education at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga.

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The Tolerance-in-Action Campaign

by Howard M. Knoff, NCSP

America is beset by a great number of significant problems that require the attention of our schools, homes and communities: prejudice and bias, violence, poverty, low levels of parent supervision, the impact of television, stereotyping, and diversity and hate crimes. Many of these circumstances have helped to create an increasing national epidemic of intolerance. In the midst of this epidemic are our school children who are asked to grow up, attend school and be interpersonally successful. Given current circumstances, these children are significantly at-risk for social and interpersonal failure — and some of them will enter the circle of intolerance, helping it to continue for another generation.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines tolerance to mean "recognition and respect for diverse practices or beliefs." *Webster's New World* states that it is "freedom from bigotry or prejudice." While these are wonderful descriptions, all that our children know is what we have taught them. And, we are not teaching them well. Children are coming to school without a sound understanding of individual differences, of individual cultures and beliefs, and of the importance of individual freedom. Further, they are coming to school without the social and interpersonal skills that will help them to practice tolerance, or at least, to successfully experience the lessons of tolerance.

School psychologists clearly are recognizing this problem — both at school and in their communities. For example, a 1996 national public opinion poll involving 250 randomly sampled school psychologists working in the schools (see *Communiqué*, November 1996) reported the following results:

- When questioned about the problems of conflict among racial, religious or ethnic groups, 42% of the school psychologists reported that the United States, as a country, is "losing ground in this area," and 34% believed that these problems had remained stable over time. Only 25% of the sample believed that the country is making progress in this area.
- When questioned about discrimination against minority groups, 26% of the school psychologists reported that the U.S. is "losing ground in this area," and 37% believed that discrimination in this area had remained stable over time. Only 37% of the sample believed that the country is making progress in this area.
- When asked whether they felt racial discrimination will get worse in the future, 71% of the school psychologists said "Yes," while only 29% reported no concern about this potential.
- 24% of the school psychologists reported either a "fair amount" or "a great deal" of discrimination against minority students in their schools.
- Finally, 28% of the school psychologists reported either a "fair amount" or "a great deal" of discrimination against gay or lesbian students in their schools.

Given the circumstances and information described above, a number of questions arise: What are our schools and communities doing to fight bigotry and prejudice and to encourage the ideals and skills of tolerance and respect? How are school psychologists and others contributing to intervention and prevention programs in this area? Finally, can tolerance be taught, and how do we do it in the face of conditions that breed intolerance on a daily basis?

The Vision and Goal

Over the past several years, a number of national efforts have converged to highlight the need for more school-based instruction and sensitivity in the area of tolerance and prosocial behavior. For example, *Goals 2000* and the *Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act* now require every school in America to be responsible for creating environments that are safe and that facilitate learning. In addition, President Clinton announced a national effort throughout 1998 to address the issue of racial understanding and harmony.

As psychologists, we know that tolerance and prosocial skills can be taught, can be transferred to home and community settings, and can be expected, encouraged and reinforced by children, youth and adults. Thus, NASP has begun a process to develop a *Tolerance-in-Action* curriculum in collaboration with a national group of experts related to the areas of discrimination, tolerance and education. Once developed, the curriculum hopefully will be implemented by school psychologists and other pupil personnel specialists nationwide in the schools. Finally, all of this will be accompanied by a national *Tolerance-in-Action* campaign that is established to help families and communities learn and reinforce the information and behavioral skills taught in the curriculum. Ultimately, we hope that the curriculum and campaign will increase incidents of positive and supportive interactions among students and others living in our communities nationwide.

Tentative Characteristics of the Curriculum

In October 1997, a planning and brainstorming meeting was held at the Carter Center in Atlanta to conceptualize and begin to plan the Tolerance curriculum, with the following groups invited: the National School Boards Association, the American Association of

School Administrators, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Middle Schools Association, the National Elementary Principals Association and the Southern Poverty Law Center among others. Before the meeting, the Tolerance curriculum was conceptualized as having three primary components: (a) a historical and content-oriented component, (b) a behavioral, pro-tolerance social skills component, and (c) a group interaction and discussion component — all for Grades K through 8.

As proposed, the ***historical and content-oriented component*** will provide a historical and literary overview of tolerance and intolerance in this country as it relates, for example, to race, religion, gender and sexual orientation. This component will give teachers a chance to educate students about the importance of tolerance in a democracy through stories and video. Students will be brought face-to-face with the negative and often tragic consequences of prejudice and hate, while also being exposed to the hope and heroism that results when people stand up for their personal beliefs. We expect this component to challenge students to examine their own lives and to consider what is necessary to create a more tolerant, prosocial world.

The behavioral, pro-tolerance social skills component will teach students the behavioral skills needed such that they (a) know and proactively practice pro-tolerance skills and (b) understand and can respond to others' intolerance and discriminatory or prejudicial behavior. The premise here is that intolerance is a learned behavior and that the strongest predictor of a child's future intolerance is his/her past intolerance. Thus, there is a need to *teach* students prosocial, assertiveness and pro-tolerance skills as early as possible, to replace intolerant ideas and behaviors with appropriate behavior, and to prepare students to respond to others' intolerant acts. The foundation of this component is the "Stop & Think" social skills program developed by Dr. Howard Knoff and Dr. George Batsche based on the work of Dr. Arnold Goldstein. The Stop & Think approach has been taught in over 800 schools nationwide, and it will be adapted specifically for the tolerance focus of this curriculum.

The group discussion component will focus on developing the group identity and support skills needed to create strong and unified peer groups that will deliver and reinforce the message of tolerance and prosocial problem-solving in school and community settings. To facilitate the goals of this component, the lessons learned from the ANYTOWN, USA program will be used. Created and implemented across the country by the National Conference for Community and Justice, the ANYTOWN, USA program typically involves a week-long series of workshops and personal encounters where up to 60 high school students share aspects of their diverse cultural backgrounds, learn about the consequences of prejudice, and explore ways to promote respect and understanding in their own lives.

Jimmy Harper, the Executive Director of the National Conference in Atlanta, has coordinated the ANYTOWN, GEORGIA program for over fifteen years. Jimmy joined NASP at its 1996 National Convention as part of a "roundtable" symposium that included high school students, supervisors, school personnel and parents who had participated in the ANYTOWN program and had been impacted by its tolerance training. From the comments of the students and the discussion at that symposium, it is clear that Jimmy and this program bring a great deal of knowledge, experience and insight to the group discussion component.

After the Curriculum

As noted earlier, once the curriculum has been completed, we hope to distribute it to school psychologists across the country for their implementation in their respective school districts. Supporting this process will be an implementation component that will describe (a) how to get the curriculum accepted into a school system; (b) who should be involved in its introduction and planning, and how they should be prepared for actual implementation; (c) how to generalize the impact of the curriculum across a school building and into the day-to-day activities and behaviors of the students and staff; and (d) how to involve the home and community, not just in how to support the curriculum, but also how to practice and reinforce its principles. In addition, a national *Tolerance-in-Action* campaign will be established to link parents, businesses, social service and other support agencies together to generalize and reinforce the information and skills taught throughout the curriculum across school, home and community settings.

We look forward to development and implementation of this curriculum. NASP's Officers, Executive Council and Delegates are participating in a number of activities to support the *Tolerance-in-Action* curriculum and campaign, and their input has been greatly appreciated. We hope that school psychologists across the country will think about how they can advance the issues of tolerance and prosocial interactions in their schools and communities so that we all can create a better world. It was only a short while ago on July 4, 1992 that Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall said:

> I wish I could say that America has come to appreciate diversity and to see and accept similarity. But as I look around, I see not a nation of unity, but of division… We cannot play ostrich. Democracy cannot flourish amid fear. Liberty cannot bloom amid hate. Justice cannot take root amid rage. We must go against the prevailing wind. We must dissent from indifference. We must dissent from apathy… We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better.

Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D., NCSP, is the Director of the School Psychology Program at the University of South Florida (Tampa, FL) and Professor of School Psychology. The 21st President of NASP, he is also the Co-Director of the Institute for School Reform, Integrated Services, and Child Mental Health and Educational Policy; and the Co-Director of Project ACHIEVE, a nationally-known school reform project.

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A Self Inventory on Promoting Tolerance

1. Do your actions promote open communication and inspire students and faculty to respect one another?

2. Have you read books or seen movies lately to increase your understanding of those different from yourself?

3 Do you take the initiative to dispel misconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices among colleagues and students?

4. Do you listen with an open mind to students, parents, and faculty members of other groups?

5. Do you avoid doing and saying things which might be offensive to members of other groups?

6. Have you encouraged diversity in organizations to which you belong?

7. Have you checked with the school librarian to learn about materials available in your school that promote tolerance?

8. Are you involved in community efforts to increase understanding and reduce violence?

9. Do you conduct groups, class meetings, or school-wide programs that help people get along better?

10. Have you spent time living in a foreign country or immersed yourself in a culture other than your own?

11. Do you work to influence policy or support legislation that promotes the rights and welfare of all children?

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I wish I could say that America has come to appreciate diversity and to see and accept similarity. But as I look around, I see not a nation of unity, but of division ... We cannot play ostrich. Democracy cannot flourish amid fear. Liberty cannot bloom amid hate. Justice cannot take root amid rage. We must go against the prevailing wind. We must dissent from indifference. We must dissent from apathy ... We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better.

Thurgood Marshall, Supreme Court Justice

From Carl T. Rowan's,
Dream Makers, Dream Breakers:
The World of Justice Thurgood Marshall,
Little, Brown & Company, 1993.

Immigrant Parents and the School

by Robert Rhodes, Ph.D. and Doris Paez, Ph.D.
New Mexico State University

Background

During the past decade, more parents and children have immigrated to the United States than at any other time since the turn of the century. Representing countries such as Mexico, Vietnam, China, India and the Ukraine, this fast growing and diverse group present unique challenges and opportunities for teachers. In addition to the cultural diversity and unique life experiences common to individuals entering from other countries, the vast majority of immigrant parents and children are from home countries which have a primary language other than English. This combination of cultural, experiential and linguistic diversity poses potential barriers to the integration of parents into the school environment. The following strategies are designed to provide proactive solutions to problems which may arise in the areas of home-school communication and parent involvement in school activities.

Home-School Communication Strategies

1. Provide a one-page notice to parents in their native language which emphasizes that all children have the legal right to a free public education regardless of their immigration status.
2. Post a notice at the school entrance informing parents that children do not need a green card, visa, passport or other proof of citizenship or immigration status to register for school.
3. During registration, introduce parents to school policies, procedures, grading structure, and programs in their native language. Parents who were educated in another country may not be familiar with the structure and format of the United States educational system. This introduction is best accomplished through face-to-face communication. However, if this format is not possible, a video-taped summary in the parent's native language may be created for on-site viewing or home check-out.
4. Teacher-to-parent contacts should be in the native language of the parent and should encompass all forms of home-school communication (e.g., informational letters for parents, school newsletters, picture day flyers).
5. Parent-to-teacher contacts may be facilitated by distributing "bilingual" teacher business cards (English on one side and native language of parent on other). These cards should include the teacher's name as well as the school address and phone number. Additional strategies include sending home several preprinted memo sheets with the teacher's name on top which could be dropped off at the school and placed in the teacher's box. Self-addressed, postage paid, bulk mail sheets might also be distributed to parents to be used for more lengthy communications or to notify the teacher of a change in address, etc.
6. Parent-teacher conference preparation should include consultation with individuals familiar with the parent's culture and behavioral "do's, don't's, and maybe's." Parents should be given the option to bring their own interpreter or to have one provided by the school. They should also be encouraged to bring an extended family member or friend for support. Research also indicates the benefit of addressing the transportation and child care needs of immigrant parents as well as the need for extended time.
7. At least one social/conversational meeting should be planned in order to develop an understanding of the parent's background and culture and their expectations of the school system. To minimize parent inconvenience, this informal meeting might be planned jointly with other teachers and school personnel working with the family. To reinforce the social atmosphere of the meeting, both the teacher and parent might plan to bring food/snacks to share.

Parents as Supporters of School and Children's Learning

1. Develop handouts in parent's native language emphasizing importance of parent involvement.
2. Expand concept of "volunteerism" and actively recruit immigrant parents as classroom volunteers during registration process. For example, volunteer parent may serve as a mentor for newly arriving parents and students. Encourage indirect participation by parents through activities that can be completed at home for use in the classroom. For example, the parent may be asked to create folders for each student for a reading activity. Participation should be on a voluntary basis with all materials supplied by the school.
3. Inform parents well in advance of their child's participation in school activities such as assemblies and programs.
4. Seek out local businesses which are willing to sponsor a "Parent of the Month" through gift certificates or products.

Resources

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Immigrant Teenagers: Helping Them Adjust to Their First Year

by Bradley Pilon, NCSP, Newcomer Center
Belmont High School (Los Angeles)

- Spend time alone with your child. There is no replacement for time alone, and outings with the entire family don't count. This is especially true if a child is being reunited with his or her parent(s) after a long separation.
- Take time to let your child go over the history of events as they occurred during your absence. Many children don't want to mention the bad things that have happened to protect their parents, yet they also harbor anger that the parents were not there to protect them. They may sound like they understand the need to separate in order for the family to immigrate, but usually still need reassurances to get beyond the feelings of abandonment, no matter how logical and mature they may sound.
- Remember that money does not equal love. The fact that it may have cost a great deal to bring a family to the United States does not mean that the child feels more loved as a result. Adults and children alike need affection to come separately from the mention of money.
- Keep the details of your intimate life private Children do not need the responsibility of knowing about marital difficulties, past or present, and may feel guilty or overwhelmed if they have taken sides. On the other hand, many children may judge their parents and their relationships, and this is part of the difficulty of raising a teenager, but the teen's opinion should not be used in place of communication between adults.
- Make future goals for yourself and your child. Your child needs to hear how long they are expected to study for their high school diploma without working to help support the family. They also need to hear what your personal goals are for job advancement, living in your current apartment and neighborhood, making trips "back home," and bringing additional siblings or relatives to join the family.
- Demonstrate confidence by delegating responsibility to your son or daughter whenever possible. Give them the benefit of the doubt as often as possible, as opposed to being overly suspicious. Your worry about what kind of trouble your son or daughter might get into could unintentionally lead them toward those things you fear most if voiced often enough.
- Be a good example of what you want from your child. If at all possible, try to attend adult school in the evenings and make an academic goal for yourself, whether it be to finish a specific level of ESL, to complete the eighth grade or high school diploma, or to attend college. This will say more than any lecture you can give your child about the importance of education.
- Provide a calm atmosphere in which to do homework. A clear table and quiet environment during a consistent time period each evening is absolutely necessary. If this is impossible at home, visits to the local library or staying after school to finish homework before leaving may be other options.
- Attend all school functions. Only through meeting teachers and learning about your child's schedule can you effectively talk with your child about his/her progress in school. Teachers will usually remember parents they have met and may be more helpful if they know you are genuinely involved.
- Ask school staff to help with problems. Each school has a Psychologist, Counselors, a School Nurse, and numerous Teachers and Administrators who may have valuable suggestions for how to deal with academic, behavior, health or communication problems, as well as advice regarding low-cost community resources.
- Identify and hold up positive examples of individuals who have "made it" in the way you expect of your child. Avoid pointing to failures unless you can point out a corresponding success. Examples should be brought up at specific times to reinforce good effort, not to induce guilt or shame when the child has committed a mistake.
- Expect the same academic success of both boys and girls. Girls in this country are not necessarily going to get married and stay home after graduation and boys may have to leave their pals when studies require it. "Machismo" conflicts with success in many ways.
- Establish routines in your life. Disruptions such as last-minute trips or overnight visitors can break your child's concentration and studies will suffer.
- Stress the importance of reading. If education is important to you, promote it by making interesting reading material available, such as books, magazines, comic books or newspapers in any language. Library cards are usually free or inexpensive and provide limitless access to such

materials. Don't push material which your child finds uninteresting, and don't censor without good cause. For example, comic books can be an excellent, non-threatening way to practice reading and should generally be allowed.

- Limit television. Too much television dulls interest in reading and promotes unrealistic attitudes about success in real life. If your child insists upon some electronic entertainment, music with printed words is better than television.
- Review the basics of good discipline: be consistent in your rewards and punishments, be as specific as possible about what behaviors you expect and select rewards and punishments which are appropriate for the act. Become familiar with what works best as a reward and try to rely more on these positive consequences than on punishment or withholding things.
- Recognize and be proud of the broad world perspective you share with your children. As bilingual, bicultural and travelled members of society you hold certain advantages over people who only know the American culture. There are many opportunities to take advantage of these important assets.
- You will not be able to avoid the hardships of raising a teenager. Expect your child to be at times rebellious and at other times to require nurturing, to sometimes behave maturely and at other times do silly things, or to be moody, or occasionally to be predictable and then surprise you with something unexpected. They will reawaken memories of your own experience as a teenager and you will grow in the process.

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Perhaps our most significant contribution to the future will be to develop and deliver programs to children that fight ignorance, that increase acceptance of differences, and that bring people together.

Carol Kelly
President's Message

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Adolescentes Imigrantes: Ayudándoles a Acomodarse en el Primer Año

por Bradley Pilon, NCSP
Newcomer Center, Belmont High School, Los Angeles

- Pase tiempo a solas con su hijo(a). No se puede sustituir ese tiempo a solas con otras actividades, y excursiones familiares no cuentan. Esto es aún más necesario en el caso del hijo que está reunificándose con sus padres después de una larga separación.
- Tome el tiempo necesario para que su hijo(a) le cuente los acontecimientos tal como ocurrieron durante la separación. Muchos jóvenes son poco dispuestos a contar las cosas malas que les pasaron creyendo que así protegen a sus padres de la verdad, pero al mismo tiempo se quedan con el resentimiento de que sus padres no estaban cuando necesitaban su protección. Aunque muchos dicen que entienden la necesidad de separarse para inmigrar a la familia, siempre necesitan ser reasegurados verbalmente para olvidar sus sentimientos de abandono, incluso los que aparentan ser muy lógicos o maduros.
- Acuérdense que el dinero no equivale al amor. El hecho de que podría haber costado mucho traer a la familia a este país no significa que el/la hijo(a) se siente más querido como resultado. Tanto los adultos como los niños necesitan sentir el cariño aparte de la discusión de dinero.
- Mantenga privados los detalles íntimos de su vida . Los niños no necesitan la responsabilidad de estar enterados sobre las dificultades en el matrimonio, pasadas o presentes, y podrían sentirse o culpables o agobiados si han tomado un lado u otro. Al mismo tiempo, muchos jóvenes juzgan a sus padres y sus relaciones, y ésto es parte de criar a un adolescente, pero su opinión no debe, en ningún momento, reemplazar la comunicación directa entre adultos.
- Trace metas tanto para usted como para su hijo(a). Su hijo(a) necesita oir por cuanto tiempo usted quiere que estudie para su diploma sin trabajar para ayudar a la familia. También se beneficiaría de oirle mencionar sus metas personales en cuanto al trabajo, la estancia esperada en su apartamento y vecindad, los viajes de regreso al país natal y fechas posibles de mandar a traer a otros familiares para unir más a la familia.
- Demuestrele la confianza dándole responsabilidades a su hijo(a) lo más posible. Busque lo positivo en vez de esperar lo peor. Sus preocupaciones sobre el tipo de problemas que les podrían llegar podrían guiarlos hacia precisamente lo que usted quiere evitar si son mencionados mucho o en mucho detalle.
- Sea un buen ejemplo de lo que quiere ver en su hijo. Si es posible, trate de asistir a la escuela de adultos en las noches y escoja una meta, ya sea solamente de terminar un cierto nivel de Inglés, terminar su diploma del grado ocho o de high school, o asistir a la universidad. Esto le comunicará más que cualquier consejo que usted le puede dar sobre la importancia de la educación.
- Provea un ambiente tranquilo para hacer tareas: una mesa limpia y silencio sin distracciones durante el mismo período cada noche. Si no se puede en casa, visitas a la biblioteca por la noche u horas de escuela extendidas para terminar con la tarea antes de salir, podrían ser alternativas.
- Asista a todas las funciones escolares. Solo conociendo los maestros, las clases y la rutina de la escuela podrá conversar con su hijo acerca de su progreso en la escuela. Los maestros recordarán a los padres que han conocido y estarán más dispuestos a acomodar cualquier petición especial que tengan.
- Pida ayuda al personal de la escuela con sus problemas. Cada escuela tiene un psicólogo, muchos consejeros, una enfermera y muchos maestros y administradores que pueden brindarles muchos consejos ya sean para solucionar problemas académicos, de comportamiento, de salud o en comunicación. También están al tanto de muchos recursos grátis en la comunidad.
- Identifique y señale ejemplos positivos de indivíduos que han sobresalido de tal modo que usted espera ver a su hijo(a). Evite indicar los fracasos a menos que puedan nombrar un éxito correspondiente. Estos ejemplos deben ser mencionados en ocasiones específicas para reenforzar el buen esfuerzo, no solo para inculcar vergüenza o culpabilidad cuando el jóven haya cometido un error.
- Exija éxito en la escuela tanto de una hija como de un hijo. Las muchachas que viven en este país no serán necesariamente amas de casa por toda la vida y los muchachos en ocasiones tendrán que escoger entre el estudio y el andar con amigos. "El machismo" interfiere con el éxito en muchas maneras.

- Establezca rutinas en su vida cotidiana. Las interrupciones como viajes improvistos o huéspedes por una noche interrumpen la concentración de su hijo(a) y los estudios pueden sufrir.
- Enfatice la importancia de la lectura. Si le importa mucho la educación, promuévala con proveer materiales interesantes para leer, tal como los libros, las revistas, las revistas de historietas ilustradas y los periódicos — en cualquier idioma. El precio actual de las tarjetas de biblioteca en Los Angeles es de cincuenta centavos y ofrece acceso sin límites a muchos materiales. No le presione a su hijo(a) con materiales que no le parecen interesantes, y no le censure sin buen motivo. Por ejemplo, las historietas pueden representar una excelente fuente de práctica para la lectura y se le deben permitir.
- Ponga restricciones al uso de la televisión porque en exceso les impide la curiosidad natural e inculca ideas no realistas sobre el trabajo y la superación en el mundo real. Si su hijo(a) insiste en acudir al entretenimiento electrónico, más vale la música con su letra impresa que la televisión.
- Repase los principios de la disciplina eficaz: Sea consistente en sus premios y castigos, sea lo más específico posible sobre la conducta que usted espera ver y escójales premios y castigos que sean los más apropiados al comportamiento. Aprenda las consecuencias positivas que motivan más y trate de usar éstas, en vez de las negativas o el negársele lo que le gusta.
- Esté consciente y orgulloso de la amplia perspectiva mundial que usted comparte con su hijo(a). Como personas bilingues-biculturales y que han viajado, ustedes disfrutan de ciertas ventajas comparado con personas que solo conocen la cultura Americana. Hay muchas oportunidades para aprovecharse de estas ventajas.
- No hay manera de evitar las dificultades de criar a un adolescente. A veces se portarán rebeldes mientras en otras ocasiones querrán que se les consienta; a veces demuestran madurez y de repente cometen tonterías; pueden estar sentimentales; o vacilan entre predicibles y caprichosos. Despiertan memorias en uno de su propia adolescencia y le inducirán a crecer como persona en el proceso.

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Limited English Proficiency

by Diane K. Wilen, Ph.D., NCSP
Broward County (FL) Public Schools

Background

Cultural diversity is widespread within the United States and is mirrored within American schools. With this diversity comes growing numbers of children whose native language is not English and who may be described as Limited English Proficient (LEP) or English Language Learners (ELL). There are very large populations of ELL students in California, New York, Texas, Illinois, New Mexico, Arizona, New Jersey and Florida. However, ELL students are present to some degree in virtually every state. Many of these ELL students are immigrants and refugees, but others were born in the United States. School dropout rates are often high among ELL populations.

The availability of bilingual education, ESOL, ESL and other special programs for ELL students differs across states and school districts. Even if students receive specialized services for their limited English proficiency, their teachers may neither speak their home language nor have direct experience with their culture.

Development

Previous life experiences, family issues, behavioral adjustment, academic performance and the second language acquisition process are all important for teachers to consider in evaluating the current status of ELL students.

Life Experiences: ELL children have often been exposed to stressful or traumatic life experiences at a very young age. They may have endured war, political strife, separation from parents and siblings, frequent moves, poverty, hunger, overpopulated refugee camps, dangerous exoduses from their countries and general uprooting. Others who are in the United States illegally live in fear of the authorities.

Medically, many ELL children are in need of services which may not have been affordable or available to them in their countries. Vision, hearing, general physical and dental exams are often indicated.

Educationally, some ELL students have a history of inconsistent schooling. Many come from countries where education is not mandatory or even available to all children. Children may have attended overcrowded schools with limited resources. Some may have been forced to drop out of school to go to work while others, especially those with mental or physical handicaps, may have been denied education in their native countries. Lack of availability of special education programs for handicapped children may actually have been the impetus for coming to the United States.

Culturally, ELL children come to school with a set of experiences, customs and values which differ from those of other students. They may celebrate different holidays and may not be familiar with American celebrations such as Halloween and Thanksgiving. Often, they eat different foods and have different meal times. Their clothing may be different. They may have different standards of etiquette. They may write their names in a different order (e.g., last, middle, first for Vietnamese) or may not write the date according to the United States custom of month, day, year (e.g., day, month, year for Hispanics). They may have different concepts of time and punctuality.

Family Issues: Because families of ELL children often lack English literacy, they can have difficulty participating in the educational process of their children. They may have trouble helping with homework and may feel inadequate to attend conferences or ask questions of educators. Often, they have different childbearing practices and values. What may be perceived by American teachers as overindulgence and lack of responsibility may be appropriate in an ELL family's culture.

Behavioral Adjustment: ELL children may manifest behaviors ranging from passivity to acting out upon entering the American school. They often experience temporary adjustment problems because of all of the stresses and changes they face in adapting to a new country, language, culture, school and life situation. They need time to adjust to their new environment.

Academic Performance: ELL children come to school with varying degrees of literacy in their own language and in English. Their language may not have the same alphabet as English and may be written in a different fashion (e.g., Hebrew has different characters and is written from right to left). This may make learning English even harder. They may have experienced different teaching styles (e.g., more emphasis on rote as opposed to analytical methods). English oral communication skills are generally mastered more quickly than reading and written language skills. Learning to read in English is often easier to those already literate in their native language. Current academic performance should be interpreted in light of educational background and life experiences. ELL students may have started school at a different age than is customary in the United States and may have come from schools where grade levels do not correspond with the K-12 system.

Second Language Acquisition Process: Second language acquisition emerges through developmental stages and is time intensive. ELL students generally acquire English conversational skills well before they attain the level of language proficiency required for success in academic classes taught entirely in English. Proficiency in the first language, motivation, self-esteem, practice, comprehensible input and appropriate instruction facilitate second language acquisition.

What Can I Do As a Teacher?

- Learn as much as possible about the cultural and language background of ELL students by reading, attending courses and speaking with minority language groups.
- Ask ELL students by what name they would like to be addressed and how to pronounce it correctly.
- Provide comprehensible instruction at a level commensurate with a student's language proficiency skills.
- Pair a new ELL student with a veteran ELL student who can be a "buddy" and who preferably speaks the same language as the ELL student.
- Encourage homework hotlines staffed by bilingual teachers or aides to assist ELL students.
- Teach survival English first (e.g., bathroom, cafeteria, book, pencil) and label common objects in the classroom in English.
- Use a dictionary which contains translations from English to the child's native language and vice versa.
- Pair visual cues and nonverbal gestures with verbal communication in the classroom. Speak English slowly and give short, concise directions. Observe ELL children to see if they understand what they are to do. Repetition may be needed.
- Encourage natural and purposeful communication in the classroom.
- Use mechanical aids such as language masters, tape recorders, overhead projectors and computers as well as realia, music, art, games and hands-on experiences to reinforce learning.
- Use cooperative learning groups to promote peer interaction and active learning.
- Enhance self-image, motivation and cultural pride by using culturally relevant materials and encouraging presentations about native foods, customs, costumes, dances, holidays and famous minority language individuals.
- Encouraging participation in extracurricular activities.
- Encouraging development of talents and special abilities.
- Encourage parent participation by calling the family if they do not respond to notes sent home, by using social workers to make home visits, and by communicating with parents in their native language whenever possible. The use of interpreters or bilingual school staff can often facilitate the latter.
- If students exhibit academic or behavior problems which appear unusual or extreme in comparison to other *ELL students*, seek help from other professionals such as school psychologists, social workers and counselors.

Resources

Fradd, S.H., McGee, P.L. with Wilen, D.K. (1994). *Instructional assessment: An integrative approach to evaluating student performance.* Reading, MA: Addison- Wesley.

(This book provides practical information on appropriate assessment and educational planning for non-English language background students. It includes valuable case studies of typical students in the process of learning English as well as special needs students.)

Scarcella, R. (1990). *Teaching language minority students in the multicultural classroom.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

(This book offers content- area teachers and other educators suggestions and instructional strategies to foster the school progress of language minority students. It includes providing comprehensible lessons, appealing to multiple learning styles, encouraging parent involvement and incorporating students' languages and cultures into the curriculum.)

The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education provides valuable materials, discussion groups, and an on-line library.

Web site: <*http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu*>

e-mail: <*askncbe@ncbe.gwu.edu*>

Phone: (800) 321-NCBE and (202) 467-0867

U.S. mail address: 1118 22nd Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20037

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Perspectives on Inclusion: Listening to the Voices of Experience

by Mercedes Herrera-Graf, NCSP

Three terms have recently emerged to label the movement to educate all children in general education: inclusion, inclusive schooling and inclusive education. While these terms are synonymous, numerous definitions have been offered by educators, local groups and professional organizations. The Illinois School Psychologists Association (ISPA) Task Force on Inclusion (Davids et al., 1994) defines inclusion as "the education of students with disabilities in the classrooms and schools they would attend if not identified as disabled, with the appropriate supports and services necessary to enable the student to be successful." Stainback and Stainback (1990) define an inclusive school as one where there "is a cohesive sense of community, accepting of differences and responsive to individual needs."

As special education students are increasingly integrated into regular classroom settings, the question arises as to how inclusion can be successful not only for the students, but for the teachers, administrators, parents and community involved. Sailor (1991) believes that schools should focus less on accelerating students who are already high achievers and much more on improving the performance of more challenging populations. Glatthorn (1990a, 1990b) recommends that this process begin at individual schools within the district where a mechanism should be put in place for shared decision-making and joint responsibility for all students at the site. This would lead to the ethic of unified, school-based ownership of all children at the local school.

If we accept this concept of school-based ownership, we also must accept ownership of the problems presented by all participants in inclusive education. One way to go about such reform is to listen to the voices of those individuals involved in the process.

Listening to Parents

A strong voice that has emerged is that of Carlos Oberti. Oberti is an advocate for increasing cooperation between the home and school. As a father, he has spent several years fighting for public school inclusion for Rafael, his eight-year-old son who has Down's Syndrome (Oberti, 1993). His experiences with inclusion led him to state that it is important for all involved in this process to have a positive attitude. Mr. Oberti pointed out that mainstreaming alone did not work for his son. "The expectation was to physically include him without addressing his special needs or the needs of his teachers." It is the last part of this sentence that is noteworthy because it highlights the fact that we are used to considering the needs of students, but unaccustomed to addressing the needs of teachers. Oberti refers to this need as "supported inclusive education."

If, as Oberti assumes, teachers have needs just like special education students, they also must have the need to learn. Part of this learning can take place when regular and special education teachers meet to exchange ideas, problem-solve together about a child and create strategies for mastering the curriculum or measuring a child's progress. Most important, by engaging in a creative learning process, teachers can collaborate to provide opportunities for building self-esteem for all children.

Another extension of this dialogue between teachers is the dialogue between educators and parents. Oberti further contends that parents must be actively engaged in the teaching process with educators. He pleads for "a coherent, organized effort for parents and educators to work together. This is an important element for inclusion because many of the skills for teaching children with special needs can be learned from the extensive experience of the parents."

As a professor and parent of a handicapped child, Elaine Wilmore (1995) would agree with Oberti regarding the involvement of parents in education. She believes that teacher attitudes and perceptions are critical to successful inclusion for any child, and that under the best of circumstances, inclusion can be a very good experience. "But we don't live in a perfect world... With too little funding, training, or development, it can be a disaster." She advocates the need for everyone involved to listen to one another, to be willing to try new arrangements, and not to be overly doctrinaire. Speaking from a dual perspective as a mother and educator, she concludes that parents and teachers have the same goal for children—to succeed in a positive, supportive environment. On the other hand, "not listening to parents has been a major factor in public education's bad rap." A good place to begin is at the Individual Education Program (IEP) conference where we can help to "honor the parents' wishes."

Not all parents are as positive about inclusion as Oberti and Wilmore. Margaret N. Carr, past president of the Learning Disabilities Association of Texas and principal of an elementary school, is also the mother of a son who has learning disabilities. In her thoughts on inclusion (1993), Carr pointed out that nothing has really been done in recent years to ensure its success. "Teachers are still working with students as their teachers worked with them... There has been no massive teacher training about effective

ways to teach students with disabilities." She felt that her son learned because he was lucky to have a parent who was a trained educator. While Carr provides a sad commentary on inclusion, her experiences point out the strong need for program development and staff training at the local level as well as at the university level.

Of the many issues related to the inclusion or integration of children with disabilities into regular classrooms, none is more important than the effects on students' learning and social relations with classmates. Scott and Suzanne Ripley found from their own personal experiences that inclusion impacted positively on their sons' social skills. Due to a rare genetic disorder, their children, Alex and Joe, have multiple disabilities, including mental retardation, cerebral palsy and speech and language problems. They had been placed in special classrooms or special schools with other children with disabilities until high school entrance. At that point, they both attended their neighborhood school in Virginia where the parents noted some positive changes (O'Neill, 1993): "Both boys have benefited socially in their new setting, and Alex and Joe are gradually becoming part of the fabric of the regular school. Alex served as a manager of the football team, and Joe has been involved in drama. When 30 students were invited to Joe's birthday party recently, 29 students showed up."

While the Ripleys have become proponents for inclusion based on the positive effects they have witnessed, their experiences lend credence to the fact that students with disabilities can attend their neighborhood school alongside nondisabled peers and be accepted. Baker, Wang and Walberg (1995), however, would point out that while the effects of inclusion are positive and worthwhile, they are not huge. "To reduce the gap between special and regular students requires both inclusion of special-needs students and effective educational methods for all students."

Listening to Students

If local school districts want to build on the experiences that the Ripley boys had, they need to listen to the voices of their own students who have had contact with their handicapped classmates. One way to achieve this is to query the students themselves through a series of questionnaires. Two middle schools located in a Minnesota community were surveyed (York et al., 1992). Classmates without disabilities were asked to indicate whether they thought it was a good idea for their specific classmate with a severe disability to be integrated in their specific class. All 181 of the classmates responded to the question. Nearly all (89.50%) of the classmates responded "yes." Many respondents elaborated on their affirmative choice. "They need to be around normal people." "She can join in with other people and make friends." When these students were asked whether they learned anything by having peers with severe disabilities in their respective classes, about two thirds (63.29%) indicated learning something positive about their classmates. The most frequent response indicated learning that peers with disabilities were more alike than different from themselves. Representative quotes were: "Most people are the same." "They are just like us but in a different way." The researchers concluded that by being included in normalized environments such as general education classes, many students with disabilities were at least perceived to have learned more appropriate social behaviors and to have acquired more desirable interpersonal characteristics.

Another way to find out how students feel about inclusion is to ask them in face-to-face interviews (Stake, 1972). In these interviews, students are asked to explain how their experiences could be enhanced at school. This approach ensures that students have a voice in what affects them in the school setting. In addition, it teaches youngsters that they can take charge of their education and their own lives. Another method to determine student attitudes would be to contact graduates and their families and discuss what changes would have made their educational experiences more positive.

Using the data gathered from students and families, curricular modifications could be made or educators could begin to develop a process for ensuring purposeful experiences for all students. Such information might also determine what supports are necessary in the classroom for students if they are to succeed. Once target areas have been identified, the information needs to be disseminated to staff. If changes are to be made, this will require cooperation, collaboration and communication across all levels — elementary, middle, junior and senior high schools.

Listening to School Personnel

It is far easier to talk about the necessity of cooperation, collaboration and communication to the inclusion process than it is to guarantee that it can be implemented or even embraced by school staff. There continues to be mixed support for the concept of full inclusion among school professionals. Some support, however, from top administrators has been reported (Stainback, Stainback, & Forest, 1989). These researchers noted that 50% of Virginia school superintendents surveyed had a positive attitude toward educating students with severe disabilities in home schools, while only 15% were negatively inclined toward inclusion. In contrast, school principals have many negative attitudes toward inclusion. These attitudes, however, appear to be related to the lack of preservice training, available resources for teachers, knowledge of best practices and personal experiences

with students with disabilities (Brinker & Thorpe, 1985; Horne, 1985).

From the vantage point of teachers, there exists considerable variability in attitudes regarding inclusion (Horne, 1985; Stainback, 1984). Since inclusion involves a major time commitment for classroom instructors, they are more likely to make accommodations when their experiences lead them to see the benefits for individual students. This leads to the conclusion that the necessary classroom supports must be made available to teachers, that there must be additional time for instructional planning, and that teachers must be given additional preparation time and advance notice before an inclusion student is enrolled in the classroom. Even prior to accepting an inclusion child, the classroom teacher should have an opportunity to observe the youngster in his or her existing setting. If a child is changing classrooms at the end of the school year, both the sending and receiving teachers should have an opportunity to share information about the child. The student might even make short visits to the new room so that there is an opportunity to become familiar with the new teacher and classmates. If an instructional aide is involved, this paraprofessional should also be included in all steps.

If we set the research aside, what do teachers themselves have to say about inclusion in face-to-face contacts? About twenty teachers employed in the Flossmoor (Illinois) School District (1994), where inclusion was in its third year of implementation, were surveyed at a district-wide meeting. The teachers represented four elementary schools and one junior high school. While concerns were voiced by all participants, dissatisfaction was particularly evident with the junior high school staff. They were concerned with clarification of their roles and that of others (special education teachers, instructional aides, support staff), especially in regard to specific instructional arrangements for inclusion students. Perhaps this is to be expected in view of the fact that elementary school teachers are traditionally more child-centered than junior high teachers who, by training, are more subject and content oriented.

Current research also supports role clarification as a concern in inclusion (Wisniewski & Alper, 1994). One solution may be to provide these teachers with more information. Thus, technical information, demonstrations, testimonials and site visits can supply them with a broader perspective on which they can build curricular adaptations and interventions for instruction. It must be recognized, however, that the problems and obstacles teachers perceive may arise out of genuine concern for the inclusion students as well as concern over who will be doing what.

Another member of the educational team is the school psychologist. This person is also directly associated with the inclusion process, although the amount of involvement varies depending on the school district. In an attempt to learn how inclusion has impacted the role of the school psychologist, the Illinois School Psychologists Association surveyed its membership in May of 1994 (Davids, et. al, 1994). Forty-six people responded; in addition, the members who were currently working in a district where inclusion was in-process were personally interviewed. Reported changes included increases in time devoted to intervention strategies, staff development, diagnostic assessment in order to monitor ongoing programs, collaborative problem-solving, participation in curriculum adaptation, counseling, intervention with families and increased participation in social skills training programs. Overall, the staff interviewed reported high levels of job satisfaction and positive attitudes toward the concept of inclusion as it impacted their roles. This stands out in sharp contrast to the Flossmoor teacher survey which revealed more dissatisfaction. One possible explanation is that the role of the school psychologist is more clearly defined in some settings, or that the psychologist is better able to exert control over role responsibilities.

The Role of Higher Education

School personnel can be supported in their inclusion efforts through the involvement of higher education institutions, particularly in the area of teacher preparation and research. Several major studies in the 1980s showed that it is difficult to classify children accurately and that the classification systems for placing students in special programs are seriously flawed (Reschly 1987; Wang, Walberg, & Reynolds, 1992; Ysseldyke, 1987). Current research efforts could be directed at comparing the documented benefits of noninclusive educational practices to those of inclusive practices. Stainback, Stainback and Forest (1989) point out that there is little research in special education on issues surrounding the development of self identity and self concept. Finally, there is a need for more explicit and rigorous techniques that use statistical and experimental methods to supplement or replace traditional narrative-based methods of research reviews (Baker, Wang, & Walberg 1995). The general term for these more objective research integration methods is "meta-analyses."

Inclusion: A Shared Vision

All participants involved in inclusion need to share the same vision. This can only be accomplished if everyone has the same goals. We are all familiar with the directive we learned as children for safely crossing the street: "stop, look, and listen." This is still a good rule today. We need to stop and take a look at

where we are with inclusion. And we need to listen to the voices of those around us who have been involved in the process so we can steer the right course when we reach new crossroads.

In the final analysis, inclusion must be recognized not as an event, but as a dynamic process—albeit, a complex, sociopolitical process that involves social change (Bushnell & Rappaport, 1971). Let the voices of those who have been there before us guide us through these changes until we learn how to make inclusive schooling successful for all students, whether they have disabilities or not. Most important, let us all listen to our own inner voices to answer the ultimate question: if this child with disabilities were mine, how much would I be willing to give to make inclusion work?

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Mercedes Herrera-Graf, Ed. D., NCSP, is on the School Psychology faculty at Governors State University (University Park, Il) and provides consultation to local school districts.

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Literature Circles: A Parent Guide to Teach African-American History

Deborah Crockett, Ph.D., NCSP
Fayette County Board of Education

Use of literature circles in the home gives parents an opportunity to read and discuss books with your children on a regular basis. Reading with your child serves several functions:

- establishes a good reading habit
- exposes your child to a variety of literature sources
- exposes your child to advanced reading material
- promotes reading comprehension and reading fluency
- promotes reading for enjoyment and entertainment
- teaches the reader to find information in printed text
- provides parents the opportunity to model reading
- helps children improve academic performance

A literature circle is a group of people, in this case family members and friends, who meet regularly to discuss a book they are reading. It is suggested that you meet with your child's teacher prior to establishing the circle so that it is consistent with similar activities in school. The teacher, school media specialist, and community librarian can help you develop an appropriate reading list for your child.

Part 1: Preparing for the Literature Circle

- The circle should meet regularly, preferably on the same day(s) each week.

  Examples: every Saturday, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 pm.

- The circle should consist of no more than five to seven people. Note if the number gets larger than this, it is suggested that you form 2 circles.
- The circle should have a "facilitator" who can lead the discussion and who reads fluently, comprehends well, writes well, and can serve as a reading model for the group.

  Examples: parent, older sibling, volunteer.

- Meet with family and friends who will participate in the circle. Discuss the steps of the literature circle so that each person understands what their role will be.

  Examples: select the person who will lead the chapter discussion, keep the chapter reading schedule, summarize the sessions points

- Materials should be available for all circle members. All group members should be interested in the reading material. *See sample passage at the end of this article.*

Part 2: Implementing the Literature Circle

- Before the reading, you may want to review themes, questions and main ideas– things to think about during the reading. If possible, give a list of discussion questions to each of the members of the circle.

  Examples: Who is the passage about? What was his major accomplishment(s)? Do you think his accomplishments makes him a role model? Why or why not? How can knowing about his accomplishments help you in your life? What did you learn about being a leader and taking risks? How have these accomplishments affected your life?

- Members may read aloud to each other or in unison and discuss what is being read. Or, the facilitator may choose to read the passage aloud after the readers have read the passage silently. **Encourage your children to read concurrently with your oral reading.** Assignments can be made ahead of time so that readers can "practice" prior to participating in the circle. *See sample passage at the end of this article.*
- Using the list of questions, begin the discussion. Allow people to volunteer answers, call on circle members to expand on responses when they volunteer. Acknowledge and reinforce the responses of each participant.

  Examples: Good job! Would someone like to add something to that answer? Does anyone have an opinion on that question? What was your favorite part of the story? What was your least favorite part of the story?

- At the conclusion of a session, summarize what has been read.

  Examples: "Bill Cosby was the first black in a non-traditional role when he costarred in a network television series, I Spy. *In 1966 and 1967 he became the first black star to win Emmy awards for best actor in a running series. Cosby was also the first black star in a television series that excluded racial themes. Cosby entered Temple University on a track and football scholarship, dropped out in his sophomore year to perform in Philadelphia coffee houses, and later completed his doctorate degree there."*

- Make assignments for the next session.

  Examples: Chris will lead the oral reading. Vicki will take notes. Curtis will led the discussion. Harriett will summarize the passage.

- Remind the group of the next meeting day, date, time.

  Examples: Our next meeting will be on Saturday, February 27th at 3:00 pm.

- Dismiss the group.

While this example focuses on an African -American theme, this process can be adapted for any ethnic group, topic, etc. Meet, read, and enjoy!

Sample passage used for this example: *Bill Cosby (1937 -) broke the color barrier in televison and became the first black in a non-traditional role when he costarred in a network television series,* I Spy. *In 1966 and 1967 he became the first black star to win Emmy awards for best actor in a running series. Cosby was also the first black star in a television series that excluded racial themes. Born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, he began comedy routines when he was in the fifth grade. Cosby entered Temple University on a track and football scholarship, dropped out in his sophomore year to perform in Phuadelphia coffee houses, and later completed his doctorate degree there. The outspoken critic of black images in television made a bid to purchase the National Broadcasting Company on October 28, 1992.* (See resource below)

Resource

Smith, Jessie Carney. (1994). *Black firsts: 2,000 years of extraordinary achievement.* Detroit, MI: Visible Ink Press., p.39.

Differences hold great opportunities for learning. Differences offer a free, abundant, and renewable resource. I would like to see our compulsion for eliminating differences, replaced by an equally compelling focus on making use of these differences to improve schools. What is important about people — and about schools — is what is different, not what is the same.

Barth, 1990, reprinted from
Inclusive Schooling Practices:
Pedagogical and Research Foundations,
Gail McGregor, Ed.D. and Timm Vogelsberg, Ph.D.,
The University of Montana —
Rural Institute on Disabilities, p. 15.

Biracial Children

by Doris Wright, Ph.D.
Georgia State University

Overview

Over the past ten years American schools have witnessed an amazing growth of biracial children from different racial and ethnic groups. These biracial children force America's teachers, counselors and school psychologists to wonder how best to maximize their education. This handout provides parents and teachers practical suggestions to help these biracial children succeed in school and in life.

There is no consensus as to what is meant by the term *biracial*. In general, it is most commonly used to describe the first generation offspring of parents from different races. It can be used to describe children of Black and White, Latino and White or Asian and White parents just to name a few. In some instances, it could be used to describe the children whose grandparents are from different races, also. The term, *biracial*, will be used here to characterize all children born to parents from different racial groups or possessing different racial heritages. The phrase, *Biracial child*, is preferred to such names as "mixed race" or interracial child.

Myths About Biracial Children

What is important to know about biracial children? School professionals and parents alike must recognize and challenge the myths that surround biracial children. Researchers Kerwin and Ponterotto (1995) mention three myths that are particularly detrimental to biracial children.

Myth 1: Biracial children are "tragic mulattos" or are seen as "marginal persons." All too often, school personnel – and even parents – buy into the notion that biracial children will have long lasting problems as a result of their racial heritage. The biracial child should be viewed as having a "double rich heritage." Destroying this myth is necessary in order to preserve the child's positive belief in oneself and in one's family of origin.

Myth 2: Biracial individuals must choose to identify with only one group. This myth suggests whenever a biracial child has a White parent and another parent of color, the child is forced to adopt the racial identity of the parent of color because society will see the child in that way. This myth is a dangerous one for a developing child because it harms a child's sense of self and esteem.

Myth 3: Biracial persons don't want to talk about their racial identity. This naive perception is one often expressed by well meaning teachers, counselors and school psychologists who believe they are protecting the child. These school professionals are afraid (or unwilling) to discuss racial heritage or racial identity with either the children or their parents. Failing to ask children about their racial heritage is counterproductive to learning. Moreover, as researchers discovered, biracial children really do not mind discussing their racial heritage if such inquiries are open and nonjudgmental.

Suggestions for Parents of Biracial Children

The above myths neither help nor support biracial children to grow and become successful in school. If parents and teachers are to overcome these myths, what should they do to help biracial children?

1. ***Understand that your children's racial heritage cannot be separated from their total growth or development.*** Racial identity develops early, often as young as age three. Teach your children early *all* about their double rich heritage and use language they can understand.
2. ***Teach children the racial customs, traditions and cultural practices of both parents or extended families.*** Respect the religious customs of each parent's racial group, also.
3. ***Consider how decisions about choice of school or neighborhood affect your child's biracial identity development.*** Select schools and neighborhoods that reflect the double rich heritage of your children.
4. ***Don't freak out if your child begins to identify with one racial group.*** This immersion into one parent's racial group is an important part of your children's development. It is not always harmful. Continue to educate your children about their racial heritage from both parents even if the child shows little interest at the moment.
5. ***Don't be colorblind!*** Help your children understand that other children and even teachers say hurtful things about their racial heritage. Teach children to develop nonviolent ways to handle these insults so that their self esteem and sense of worth are not damaged.
6. ***Expect biracial teenagers to face special challenges during adolescence.*** Peer pressure and peer prejudices can be harmful to biracial teens. Such destructive peer pressures can be negated through their participation in sports, band, clubs and other activities that do not place significance solely on race.
7. ***Teach late adolescent and early adult biracial individuals how to preserve their double rich heritage in college or at work.*** Young adults

begin to immerse themselves in one cultural group to the exclusion of the other one. Help these young adults to continue valuing their double rich heritage while intensely exploring the cultural group of one parent.

Recommendations to Teachers and Other School Personnel

1. ***Color blindness to a child's racial heritage impedes learning.*** Do not ignore the importance of a learner's racial background as you design classroom activities. Remember children learn within a racial and cultural context.
2. ***Ask children about their racial background.*** It is okay to ask biracial children about their "double rich heritage." It must be done in an open an nonjudgmental manner. Ask parents to tell you what racial labels or descriptions are most appropriate for your child.
3. ***Consult with experts about appropriate interventions for working with biracial children.*** Most teachers received no formal training in college concerning biracial children. Ignorance is no excuse when it comes to educating biracial children. Consult your principal, other school personnel or community leaders to help you understand these children.
4. ***Never permit any racially harmful language or actions to occur within your own classroom.*** Remaining silent whenever hurtful comments are made about biracial children amounts to colluding with the oppressor. Teach children early about the harmful effects of racial slurs. Correct your students whenever you hear such language. Work with your principal to eradicate all professional practices and teacher language that harms biracial children, too. Do not tolerate such language in teachers' lounges, either.
5. ***It is not your role to assign a racial designation to a child.*** Never tell biracial children what you believe to be their racial group or racial heritage. If you do comment, you could be supporting a racial stereotype. Discuss your concerns with parents. Accept whatever racial designation parents tell you.
6. ***Understand how racial heritage is related to a biracial child's sense of self and esteem.*** Be sure that your classroom activities and your comments all work together to promote the "double rich heritage" of biracial children.
7. ***Become an advocate for biracial children.*** Speak out on behalf of biracial children if you see professional practices or school customs that you believe are detrimental to biracial children and also to children of color. Work to develop curricula that supports biracial identity development.

Summary

This handout offers several suggestions to teachers and parents alike for the purpose of supporting biracial children at all ages. These suggestions do not require advanced degrees or sophisticated understanding. All that is required is a respect for individual differences and an appreciation for the richness that children from dual cultures can create. Teachers and parents must expand their partnerships in order to create innovative and racially supportive classroom and family interventions for biracial children. Together, they can develop effective learning resources to help biracial children excel and achieve.

Resources

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Multicultural Education: Current Status and Future Directions

by Christine W. Burns, Kevin M. Fenstermacher, Tracine Y. Godfrey and Megan E. McCormick

Since the 1970s, multicultural education has been a significant reform in education supporting the pluralistic nature of the United States' society and confronting various forms of inequality. We are currently witnessing what has been referred to as the "browning of America." By the middle of the 21st century, Caucasian Americans will be in the numerical minority. This shift in demographics is already being observed in the public schools. Currently 25 of the nation's largest school districts have ethnic minority populations that constitute the majority of their students (Rogers, Ponterotto, Conoley & Wiese, 1992). One third of Arizona's 618,226 students are ethnic minorities; one half of California's 4,400,000 students are ethnic minorities; and one fourth of Nevada's 210,741 students are ethnic minorities (Hafner & Green, 1992). Hafner and Green also point out that up to 20% of California's ethnic minority student population is limited in English proficiency with over 90 languages being represented throughout the state. A growing imbalance has resulted between the racial, cultural and ethnolinguistic composition of the K-12 student population and teacher workforce. For example, in California, 81% of teachers are white, 7% are Hispanic, 3% are Asian, 6% are Black and 3% are identified as "other" (Hafner & Green, 1992).

Historical Perspective

Historically, American education has had a "full immersion" approach to the task of educating immigrants and their descendants. Valencia (1992) points out that this approach was useful for developing an American culture and successful for the majority of the European immigrants. However, it has not been as successful with other ethnic populations that include African Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and Native Americans. Valencia (1992) cites several reasons why the above ethnic groups have found it difficult to assimilate into a dominant culture, including racism, low expectations by educators for these children, assignment to non-college preparatory tracks, and the misuse of achievement and career placement testing. The roots of multicultural education can be traced back to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. At that point in time the primary objective of multicultural education was to address the needs of those students who historically had been most neglected or miseducated by the schools, primarily students of color.

Definition of Multicultural Education

The changing demographics of our nation's schools as well as the failure of a "full immersion" approach to education provide the impetus for the adoption of multicultural education in our schools. What is multicultural education? Nieto (1992) in her book on diversity defines multicultural education in a sociopolitical context as a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (e.g., ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic and gender) represented by the students, their communities and teachers.

Multicultural education permeates the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as the interactions among teachers, students and parents, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education furthers the democratic principles of social justice. Many individuals use the term "multiculturalism" to refer to activities such as cooking ethnic foods and discussing African-American achievements during Black History week. Bouttte and McCormick (1992) view these activities as isolated and discontinuous; they are actually "psuedomulticultural" activities. The seven basic characteristics of multicultural education, as defined by Nieto (1992), include:

1. ***Multicultural education is anti-racist education.*** In order for education to be anti-racist, racism must be understood and openly discussed in the classrooms. Racism can be defined as racial prejudice and discrimination—supported by institutional power and authority—used to the advantage of one race and the disadvantage of other race(s). The critical element which differentiates racism from prejudice and discrimination is the use of institutional power and authority to support prejudice and enforce discriminatory behaviors in systematic ways with far-reaching outcomes and effects (NASP, 1993). Phillips (1988) states that multicultural education needs to teach the following:
   - How to recognize when culturally and racially different groups are being victimized by the racist and biased attitudes of the larger society.
   - How to recognize institutional racism, which is a system that gives privilege to one group

over others. Institutional racism is apparent by its consequence rather than its intent. For example, one consequence of institutional racism/sexism is that all the presidents of the U.S. have been white men.

- How to act against the prevailing forces that perpetuate racism.

In order to teach these concepts, we as individuals need to be aware of how we unknowingly participate in our own oppression and the oppression of others. We must explore the stereotypes we have learned that are racist and ethnocentric, and help students to do the same.

2. ***Multicultural education is basic education.*** Multicultural education is as indispensable for living in today's society as are reading, writing, arithmetic and computer literacy. In practice, at the very least this would mean that all students would be fluent in a language other than their own, aware of the literature and arts of many different peoples, and familiar with the history and geography not only of the United State but also of African, Asian, Latin American and European countries.
3. ***Multicultural education is important for all students, not only for students of color or for so called "disadvantaged" students.*** Multicultural education is by definition expansive. It is about all people; it is also for all people, regardless of their ethnicity, language, religion, gender, race or class. Many teachers continue to view multicultural education as education for the "culturally different" or the "disadvantaged." To discuss Hispanic literature or Black leaders in our history only when there are Hispanic and/or Black children in the classroom is an ethnocentric interpretation of multicultural education.
4. ***Multicultural education is pervasive.*** It is a philosophy, a way of viewing the world, not simply a program or a class or a teacher.
5. ***Multicultural education is education for social justice.*** Classrooms need to encourage discussions that focus on social justice. These discussions might focus on concerns that affect culturally diverse communities—poverty, discrimination, war, the national deficit, and what students can do to change them.
6. ***Multicultural education is a process.*** It is ongoing and dynamic. It represents relationships among people, expectations and learning environments.
7. ***Multicultural education is critical pedagogy.*** According to Banks (1987), the main goal of a multicultural curriculum is to help students develop decision-making and social action skills. This enables students to view events and situations from a variety of perspectives. A multicultural approach values diversity and encourages critical thinking, reflection and action. Students can be empowered through this process. Multicultural education is both a critical and liberalizing education, in contrast to what Freire (1985) refers to as "domesticating education" which emphasizes passivity, acceptance and submissiveness.

Multicultural Education Training

In the 1970's, there was a shift away from the full immersion approach in teaching culturally diverse students. The American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education's (AACTE) Committee on Multicultural Education recommended that schools no longer try to minimize the differences between children's cultures, but should instead promote cultural pluralism (Buckalew & Hickey, 1982). In 1977 the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) required all accredited teacher training programs to incorporate multicultural concepts into existing programs (Buckalew & Hickey, 1982). Valencia (1992) identified two approaches to teacher training that have been adopted by colleges of education: In the "integrated course approach," multicultural issues are addressed in *all* teacher training courses including micro teaching laboratories, practica and student teaching activities. The "separate course approach" emphasizes multicultural perspectives and issues within a *single* course. In his approach, future teachers are less likely to relate the multicultural content learned in the professional education course to field-based practica and student teaching activities in public school classrooms.

Grant and Secanda (1990) reviewed the research examining pre-service teacher education and highlighted the following points regarding multicultural teacher training: 1) After course work there is a gain in knowledge and more positive attitude for teachers, but after one month the change in attitudes was negligible. 2) When students are immersed in the culture of the minority through field work, increases in positive attitude, involvement, skills and employment success continue over time. 3) Unless teachers are shown practical ways to incorporate multicultural education into their classrooms, they often will not see the need, especially those who teach in predominantly white classrooms. 4) The more multicultural course credits a teacher had, the more likely they were to utilize multicultural teaching strategies in the classroom. 5) Human relations courses have a positive impact on preservice teachers' attitudes regarding classism, racism and sexism.

A study conducted by McDaniel, McDaniel, and McDaniel (1988) examined the relationship between what is taught in teacher training courses concerning multicultural education and what is actually done in the classroom. They identified four areas of emphasis

in which content is presented in multicultural education classes: experiences, understandings, skills and attitudes. High, positive correlations exist between what is emphasized in teacher training programs and what is utilized by teachers in the field. A strong training emphasis on experiential learning of multicultural material can be retained and subsequently implemented more easily than other types of learning. Overall, the correlations between what is emphasized in teacher training programs and what is utilized by teachers in the field were much higher among younger teachers (20-43 years old). Additionally, the researchers found a robust relationship between teacher experience and their incorporation of multicultural experiences, understandings, skills and attitudes. There is a stronger correlation among minority teachers between their teacher training and utilization of learning regarding multicultural issues than among majority teachers. The authors concluded that, in order for multicultural education to be effective, it will need to be more experiential in nature.

Sleeter (1989) surveyed teachers trained in multicultural education at the preservice level to determine to what extent they incorporated multicultural education into their classrooms. Teachers were surveyed about their efforts to reduce racism and sexism, as well as general prejudice. It was found that lower class and racial minority students receive information about non-whites and lower class people much more often than do students who are white and/or middle class. They also learn more frequently about stereotyping and prejudice.

Hafner and Green (1992) identified five clusters of skills that teachers can develop in order to be effective in teaching culturally diverse students:

1) becoming proficient in helping ESL students acquire English skills
2) working toward understanding students' native language and developing teaching strategies in that language whenever possible
3) adjusting the curriculum to meet culturally diverse and ESL students' needs
4) encouraging student interaction in the classroom
5) collaborating with the child's parents and the community.

Multicultural Curriculum

In developing a multiculturally oriented education, change is required throughout the entire educational system. One focus of change is the classroom curriculum. The literature has focused on two distinct areas of curriculum development. The first is characterized by theoretical perspectives and suggestions for multiculturally based modifications within the existing educational environment. The second involves the researched and empirically supported effects of cooperative learning strategies and how they can be utilized to form the foundation for a multiculturally oriented curriculum.

It is not the intent of the authors to suggest that there is (or should be) a standard approach to developing a multiculturally based education. The curriculum should be responsive to the uniqueness of each classroom by examining the specific needs and experiences of the students. The literature does, however, offer several approaches that can be utilized to begin the development of a multicultural curriculum. In addressing these issues, Nieto (1992) raises two areas of concern related to curriculum reform. First, an examination of the existing curriculum within the majority of schools reveals the tendency for it to be skewed towards a White, male , European-American perspective. This approach excludes the perspectives, realities and experiences of many students. Secondly, it is clearly not feasible or productive to suggest that educators entirely dispose of one curriculum and adopt another. There are certain aspects of the existing curriculum that have been demonstrated to be effective and should be retained. The literature (Banks, 1987; Hafner & Green, 1992; Nieto, 1992) suggests that an effective solution involves integrating both approaches. That is, continue to utilize the effective aspects of the existing curriculum as a basis from which to expand and also to begin the process of incorporating components of a multicultural education.

Utilizing the existing curriculum as a basis from which to expand into the area of multiculturalism has been extensively described by both Banks (1987) and Nieto (1992). It involves exploring academic subjects such as history, reading and mathematics from a perspective that has been traditionally excluded from the curriculum. For example, when studying the Revolutionary War, have the students examine this event from the perspectives of African Americans, American Indians, women and other groups. Exploring the ways in which mathematics is used in other cultures (i.e., an abacus for mathematical calculations) can also be utilized to introduce different approaches to instruction. The goal of this curriculum is to introduce and emphasize the many different perspectives and approaches that exist within a multicultural society.

The process of integrating aspects of a multicultural curriculum can begin by involving the students, parents and the community. Nieto (1992) offers several multiculturally based instructional activities that can lead to curriculum reform. She suggests that students create a cultural history library within the school. This involves having the students obtain written or oral stories, poems and legends from their family members. The library then becomes a collection of cultural experiences that can be explored by the other students. Another activity that can be

incorporated into the curriculum is the involvement of local community members in the educational process. This can range from police officers discussing law enforcement to local business operators instructing the students on the workings of small businesses. The exposure of students to a variety of life experiences will begin the process of affirming diversity within the classroom (Nieto, 1992).

The second area of curriculum reform that is discussed within the literature is the use of cooperative learning strategies. Allport (1954) found several characteristics that were common to effective multiculturally oriented programs. The programs included: (a) a fostering of contact and acquaintance among students of various backgrounds; (b) an emphasis on instilling a sense of equality in social status; (c) an avoidance of artificiality; and (d) the support of the community in which they occurred. Pate (1989) found one of the most effective means of reducing prejudice is not through the study of prejudice or ethnicity but rather through cooperative learning.

Traditionally, educational settings have fostered competitive environments with relatively superficial contact between individuals. Allport's (1954) research suggests that competitive environments when combined with markedly differing status can be extremely detrimental to intergroup relations. Competitive environments, as many classroom settings are structured, can maintain and even contribute to the prejudicial attitudes and beliefs of the students. In order for multiculturalism to be a part of the educational environment, a restructuring of traditional curriculum approaches is needed.

Allport (1954) concluded that a technique was needed in which group members shared equal status and worked together to achieve a common goal. This contact theory on intergroup relations posits that an individual's attitudes and behavior toward a member of a disliked group will become more positive in nature after experiencing cooperative, interpersonal interactions. This research is the foundation on which many cooperative learning strategies were to be developed. Blaney, Stephen, Rosenfield, Aronson & Sikes (1977), Aronson, Bridgeman, & Gefner (1978) and Aronson & Osherrow (1980) developed the framework for the jigsaw method of cooperative learning. This technique creates interdependence among individuals by assigning key components of the learning tasks to each member and structuring peer-interaction in groups. This approach ensures that completion of the task is dependent on mutual cooperation of group members. Performance on the learning task is then evaluated through an exam-like procedure in which rewards are based on the individual's understanding of the materials presented by the group. That is, the exam scores contribute to individual grades, and not to a group score. Slavin (1978) recognized the benefits of cooperative learning and contributed his own techniques to the jigsaw strategy. The difference, however, involves the use of individual performances on the exam to determine a team score. The Jigsaw II strategy emphasizes less task interdependence and more reward interdependence than the Jigsaw method (Singh, 1991).

Additional studies (DeVries, Slavin, Fennessey, Edwards, & Lombardo, 1980; Stephen, 1978) have supported the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in increasing student achievement, self-esteem and improved interpersonal liking. The jigsaw approach does not involve extra costs and teachers can be easily trained to introduce and facilitate this type of cooperative learning within the classroom. The technique is versatile in that it can be utilized in many subject areas with students of all ages and abilities (Singh, 1991). Additional methods have been utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning in facilitating intergroup attitude change. Johnson and Johnson (1984) found that: (a) intergroup cooperation without competition tends to promote more positive attitudes and relationships between majority and minority individuals than either interpersonal competition or individualistic efforts; and (b) intragroup cooperation with intergroup competition promotes more positive attitudes and relationships between majority and minority students than does either interpersonal competition or individualistic efforts. The promotion of interpersonal attraction can be explained by the fact that within cooperative situations participants benefit from encouraging other group members to achieve, whereas in competitive situations participants typically benefit from obstructing the success of others (Johnson, Johnson, & Maruyoma, 1983).

Cooperative learning techniques have and are being implemented in many classrooms because of their positive effects on student achievement. However, the defining characteristics of these strategies need to be expanded to include them as potentially powerful tools to combat the many forms of prejudice that exist in the educational environment. Cooperative learning strategies, if utilized correctly, can become an important component of multiculturally oriented education.

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This article was submitted by the NASP Children's Services Committee's Multicultural Diversity Work Group. Christine W. Burns, Ph.D., Kevin M. Fenstermacher, M.S. and Tracine Y. Godfrey, B.A. are at the University of Utah; Megan E. McCormick, M.S. is affiliated with the Jordan School District (Sandy, UT) and the University of Utah.

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Around the Freedom Table: Black and Jewish Youths Share a Heritage of Liberation

By Emily Yellin

After tasting the flat, bland square of matzoh, the best that 16-year-old Requanal Griffin can offer is a diplomatic "It's all right." Jennifer Hirsek, also at the seder table, quickly tries to soften the impression; "It needs butter," she says, "It's a lot better with butter."

Griffin and about a dozen other African American teenagers, sitting at four long tables in the basement of Temple Emanu-El in Birmingham, AL, are participating in their first Jewish/African American seder, sponsored by PEACE Birmingham (People Establishing a Cultural Exchange). The citywide program brings together African American and Jewish teenagers to explore common dimensions of their heritage.

With the encouragement of Hirsek and the 14 other Jewish youths present, Griffin and her fellow guests inspect the carefully arranged elements on the Passover table. The unfamiliar assortment of food, they discover, is not meant to tantalize their taste buds so much as to kindle their consciousness; a small bowl of salt water symbolizes the tears shed during Jewish bondage in Egypt; horseradish is a reminder of the bitterness of enslavement; a lamb bone stands for sacrifices made for freedom; chopped apples with nuts represent the sweetness of liberation; and a boiled egg and parsley suggest springtime and renewal.

The African American teenagers learn that Passover serves as a yearly reminder to Jews all over the world of the pain their ancestors endured during 400 years of slavery in Egypt 3,000 years ago. In addition, the guests come to understand that the sacred meal celebrates the Jews' eventual freedom and deliverance to the Promised Land as chronicled in the Old Testament book of Exodus.

While the assortment of foods may seem unusual to the African American teens, the message behind it of never forgetting the hope, courage and faith of one's ancestors in the face of enslavement sounds strikingly familiar. Garlana Hall, a Black high school senior, begins to make connections. "Our pasts are a lot alike," she says, "Slavery kept African Americans from learning our identity. Our heritage was lost and we are still feeling the effects. Things we are going through now came from things that happened back then."

In the same vein, the Jewish teenagers make connections to more recent affronts on their heritage. "Jews lost their identity in the Holocaust," Hirsek says, "That was the point, to get rid of Jewish identity."

And Hill points out another common thread; "Slavery was meant to break our spirits and kill us, but the flip side went against that, because for some, it just made us stronger." Hill, Hirsek and the rest are seeing that both groups experienced oppression and bigotry, yet their cultures managed to endure.

A Starting Point

Such insights — born of fellowship rather than history lessons — are a central goal of PEACE Birmingham and similar Black/Jewish youth dialogue projects. The somewhat structural setting of a Passover seder, Kwanzaa celebration or other cultural event offers people who might not otherwise mingle socially a starting point for meaningful interaction. Sometimes individual members of an African American and a Jewish congregation will host an informal gathering. Other programs make more concerted and sustained efforts at forging positive Black/Jewish relations. And many of the most successful of these initiatives have focused on teenagers.

PEACE Birmingham, which started in 1995, is one of those groups. It helps high school students branch out beyond neighborhood boundaries. In addition to the seder, the group has visited a Southern plantation and built a Habitat for Humanity house together. For many of the students, these encounters present the first opportunity they have ever had to construct friendships across religious and racial lines.

Mark Gaines, one of the African American adult organizers of PEACE Birmingham, says the program hopes to offer young people such positive encounters to replace any negative stereotypes. "It gives the kids a chance to learn what sets of experiences lead someone to make certain assumptions about them as African Americans or Jewish people. And then it helps them develop the skills to challenge those assumptions in a way where we all learn, and we get past the fear, the unknown."

Crossing Boundaries

Sharing of in-depth experiences, says Cherie Brown, is a recurring component of the groups she has seen succeed with young people. Brown is executive director of the National Coalition Building Institute, a 14-year-old organization that trains people to cross racial and religious boundaries. In addition, Brown notes, only groups that directly address what she calls the three main areas of tension in Black/Jewish relations get beyond the superficial.

"You have to work through racism among Jews, anti-semitism among Blacks, and class issues on both sides," she observes. "If you avoid those rough spots, you are not building what we call authentic relation-

ships among the kids." Another barrier she feels must be addressed is the tremendous pressure placed on many teenagers by family and peers not to interact outside their race or religion.

During the PEACE Birmingham seder, some of those difficult issues arise when Coretta Thomas, an African American high school senior, discusses hearing the word "Jew" used as a verb to indicate cheating in business practices. "I've heard people say, 'He's going to Jew you.' To me that was just their ignorance that made them say that."

The Jewish teenagers agree and go on to discuss what they do when they hear racial slurs from other White people. "I hate the 'N-word," says 17-year-old Todd Martin, "It makes me so mad, and when I hear White people using it, I always speak up."

During most of the discussion, Requanal Griffin does not say much; she just takes it all in. The seder is her first experience with PEACE Birmingham and one of her first encounters with Jewish people. Afterwards, she says she definitely wants to come back to another meeting. "I think it is good to know about others and to learn about their lives and what they are offended by, and for them to learn the same from us."

Then she confides, "I was overwhelmed that they could understand what we have gone through, I'm so used to hearing White people dogging us out. That they can understand and take up for us shocked me, in a good way. I had never heard that before. Also, I had no idea that Jews felt so deeply about Passover or that they had been discriminated against, too."

Later that night, Requanal felt the impact of the gathering carry over into her everyday life. At the grocery store with her mother, she saw some matzoh and other Passover foods on the shelf. Although she was not tempted to buy any, she observes, "A year ago I wouldn't have even noticed that food or known what it was, but this year I did. I thought a little more about the Passover message behind the food and the Jewish people I had met. I thought about how much I liked the open discussion and how having the chance to express yourself in front of another race can make you feel free."

Emily Yellin is a free-lance writer based in Memphis, Tennessee.

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In caring communities, an appreciation of differences is fostered through a curriculum that emphasizes friendship, caring, and a respect for diversity

Reprinted from, *Child Development Project*, 1994; Dalton and Watson, 1997; Kohn, 1991; p. 22.

Enhancing the Communication Skills of Newly-Arrived Asian American Students

Li-Rong Lilly Cheng, San Diego State University

The number of Asian/Pacific Americans (APAs) in the United States has increased significantly in recent decades, largely resulting from the exodus of millions of Southeast Asians to this country. APAs continue to arrive through sponsorships and business visas, despite tightened immigration policies and other restrictions. They now number eight million.

One motivating factor for APA immigration is the quality and flexibility of education in the U.S. Indeed, the Confucian tradition emphasizes the importance of education, and new immigrants work hard to overcome linguistic and cultural challenges to obtain a good one. Traditional Asian families expect their children to do well in school, and may feel ashamed and responsible if a child does poorly or needs special attention. In addition to regular schooling, many Asian American parents take their children to community language schools on weekends, expecting them to increase their home language skills and maintain their native culture.

The new APA immigrants vary greatly in their time of arrival, prior education, economic status, and immigration history, among other factors. Some are unaccompanied minors; others are graduate students with broader experiences and exposure to their own culture and language. The younger students seem to adjust more quickly. The cultural and historical backgrounds of APAs also affect adjustment. Southeast Asians who were not prepared for their immigration have often found the adjustment process frustrating and frightening. Conversely, other Asian immigrants, including East Indians, Pakistanis, and those from Asian Pacific areas, grew up bilingually and do not find the English language too much of a challenge, yet their cultural differences can still be difficult to negotiate.

This digest focuses on meeting the educational needs of recently immigrated children. It offers educators some suggestions for understanding, motivating, and empowering students, and for working with their parents.

Challenges for Asian/Pacific American Children and Their Teachers

Making learning an exciting and meaningful process is challenging for teachers of newcomer students, for they must find creative ways to make connections with them (Moss-Kanter, 1995). The newcomers usually have various levels of English language proficiency, and may have limited opportunities to practice the language outside the school setting. Moreover, school discourse is generally more formal than other communication, and it is guided by a set of linguistic and social rules that are conveyed through oral and written, and nonverbal, messages and interaction. Many newcomer students find the rules incomprehensible because they differ so widely from their experiences in Asian classrooms. APA children who live in "ethnic enclaves" (such as Flushing, New York, and Little Saigon in southern California) experience particular difficulty in gaining both basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic linguistic proficiency (CALP) in English (Cummins, 1981). So, while some APA students actively engage in verbal discourse with their teachers, others are disenfranchised during classroom discussions and risk school failure.

Further, American teachers expect students to be interactive, creative, and participatory, while APA parents teach their children to be quiet and obedient, and not to question teachers (Cheng, 1991,1994). APA children are used to learning through listening, observing, reading, and imitating; responding to teachers' questions based on lectures and textbooks; and taking tests that require only the recall of factual information. Thus typical American classroom activities leave students feeling ambivalent and confused. American teachers may misinterpret students' resulting behavior as a sign of deficiency:

- Delay or hesitation in response: Students may be unsure of an answer or unfamiliar with the discourse style, or they may simply feel disengaged and lost.
- Frequent topic shifts and poor topic maintenance: Students may not have sufficient knowledge to maintain the topic, not be familiar with the rules for gaining the floor of the classroom, or simply fear and avoid interactions.
- Inappropriate nonverbal expressions: Students may avoid eye contact with adults (a sign of respect in Asian culture), frown (in concentration, as opposed to displeasure), or giggle (from embarrassment or lack of understanding, not in response to something perceived as humorous).
- Short responses: Students may not be proficient enough to reply in long, cohesive utterances, or they may be too shy to respond.
- Use of a soft-spoken voice: A loud voice may signal disrespect in some Asian cultures.
- Taking few risks: Students may fear being embarrassed or ridiculed by saying something foolish.
- Lack of participation and failure to offer information: In Asian classrooms volunteering information may be considered bold.
- Embarrassment over praise: Students' native

culture may regard humility and self- criticism highly.

- Atypical greeting rituals: Students may appear impolite or unfriendly because they look down (out of respect or fear) when the teacher approaches instead of offering a greeting.

Adding to communication problems between teachers and APA students are the personal challenges that many newcomers face, some of which affect their ability to learn. They include: an impoverished background; crowded living quarters with no place to study; a poor education in their native land (a particular problem for older children); parents who do not feel comfortable getting involved in the school system; and a lack self-esteem and feeling different from the other students, which can be exacerbated by the segregation of students with limited English proficiency (Posnick-Goodwin, 1998).

Strategies for Overcoming Cultural Differences Between Educators and Students

To communicate effectively, and to accurately determine the children's communicative competence, administrators, teachers, and counselors need to understand students' home culture and discourse rules, and the similarities and differences between Asian and American schools. When problems arise with a student, they have to consider a combination of explanations, including linguistic, cultural, traumatic, or neurophysical Cheng & Chang, 1995). They also need to examine the cultural dimensions of interaction between themselves and their students, and guard against stereotyping children or generalizing by relying on catalogs of cultural patterns. To help themselves overcome cultural differences, educators can do the following (Cheng, Chen, Tsubo, Sekandari, & Alfafara-Killacky, 1997):

- Explore their own background to better understand their attitudes about their own culture and other cultures.
- Learn about all aspects the students' various cultures, and develop an appreciation for their cultural beliefs, perceptions, and values.
- Understand and act on the fact that the most effective interventions take account of students' backgrounds.
- Consider the individual first. While it is important to incorporate the student's culture in an effective manner, focusing on the individual rather than a group is key to improving the quality of service in school settings.
- Place newcomer students in programs, classrooms, and situations that are appropriate to their level of English language proficiency and cultural acclimation, monitor their ability to function in all aspects of school life, and be aware of changes in the settings that can affect their ability to function in them.

Strategies for Making Connections With Newcomer Families

Parents who are having their own difficulties in adapting to a new language and culture may feel inadequate to help their children with schoolwork or socialization. Also, because of homeland traditions, many Asian American parents do not believe that it is important to become involved in their children's schools or education.

Students benefit significantly from their parents' involvement, however; they feel less marginalized as they view themselves and their families as constructive members of the school community. Even more significant, families can play an important role in their children's social, language, and literacy development by involving themselves in their education (Chang, Lai, Shimizu, 1995). In addition, parents can aid teachers by informing them about their children's use of home and school language, the educational resources available at home, and the community resources available to their children.

Thus, schools need to work hard to encourage the involvement of newcomer parents in both school activities and literacy learning at home; they need to reach into the community and establish a partnership with their students' families. Community members should also actively encourage parents to become involved in school activities. Mentors can explain about American education expectations and schools. PTA members can serve as models for APA newcomer parents and can encourage them to become active in the organization.

Some specific suggestions for parent involvement in school include: volunteering for school activities, such as field trips; helping in the office, the library, or the classroom; preparing food for bake sales and student social events; and participating in multicultural fairs.

Conclusion

Given the complexity of the Asian/Pacific American student population, educators can find it difficult to learn about every student's language, culture, and social background. However, the ability to communicate effectively across cultures can be developed, and educators can establish mutually beneficial partnerships with immigrant families. Integrating cross-cultural competence into a school's culture, and designing teaching strategies specifically to meet the educational needs of newcomers, can significantly improve both the academic achievement and social acclimation of immigrant students.

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Supporting the Student in the Sexual Minority: Thriving in a Heterosexist School

by Jami L. Van Ryswyk

School psychologists in every secondary school in the country face formidable challenges. Among these challenges is assisting administrators, teachers and other school personnel in providing the best, least restrictive education to children with special needs. The students in our school populations who fit into cultural and ethnic minority categories generally qualify for and are given consideration for support. Most would agree that students who are in the minority face unique challenges in the school environment. Among these minority populations is the group of adolescents in the sexual minority – those who have identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual (GLB).

A "heterosexist" school is defined as a school in which heterosexuality is assumed to be inherently superior to homosexuality (Francoeur, 1991, as cited in Lasser & Tharinger, 1997). In such an environment, most students are believed to be heterosexual. In a sense, they are "straight until proven gay." Although there are many exceptions, many American schools deny the problem of GLB teens and their needs.

Kinsey (1948), as cited in Uribe and Harbeck (1991), estimated that 10% of the total number of students in the schools are exclusively homosexual. Each of these students, by the nature of their sexual identity, finds himself or herself facing roadblocks to his or her mental and physical health. According to Coleman and Remafedi (1989), GLB teenagers were first on a 1987 list of youth needing special preventive services in the schools. O'Conor (1994) indicated that this need for special services makes GLB teens a significant "at-risk" population.

Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are

The decision to "come out of the closet" into a sometimes unsupportive environment is not one that is made easily by GLB students. To be an "out" homosexual can make a student vulnerable to hostility from teachers, fellow students, family and community members. The decision having been made, GLB students are then faced with the task of acclimating their newly embraced sexual identity into the lifestyle they choose to pursue.

Many GLB adolescents choose to keep their sexual orientation a secret rather than face these issues. In fact, Johnson (1996) goes so far as to say that "One of the extraordinarily negative consequences of living in a homophobic environment for the gay/lesbian youth is the internalized belief that acceptance becomes based upon how well one can hide (lie about) who one really is" (p. 40).

Secrecy has its own risks for these teenagers. As Treadway and Yoakam (1992) indicate, "given the costs of hiding – depression, substance abuse, suicide – choosing to be open about sexual orientation is clearly a healthier, more productive choice for lesbian and gay teens" (Smith, 1971, as cited in Treadway & Yoakam, 1992, p. 354).

GLB students rarely make an easy transition from their status as a perceived heterosexual to that of a member of the sexual minority. The experience of coming out of the closet can be a lonely and agonizing one. Johnson (1996) reports that:

> *...this sense of personal isolation is often accompanied by a belief on the youth's part that he or she is alone in the world in terms of the internal feelings being experienced. The youth is also intensely aware of the attitudes of peers and of the larger society concerning homosexuality (p. 40).*

Uribe and Harbeck (1991) agree that the adolescent years are a time of inherent challenge and struggle, struggle that can be further complicated by the child's desire to embrace his or her sexual identity. They state that GLB teens have as their primary developmental task a need to adjust to the socially stigmatized role implied by their sexual orientation.

The School's View

Some school professionals fear that to address homosexuality in the schools is to encourage teens to choose a life in the sexual minority. This view is not supported by research. Information does not cause homosexuality – it is unreasonable to expect that the discussion of homosexuality in the middle or high school will lead students to adopt this "lifestyle." According to Uribe and Harbeck (1991), "...in the one court case that extensively explored the relationship between childhood influences and homosexuality, the testifying experts and the judge agreed that a child's sexual orientation was firmly established by age five or six at the latest" (*Joseph Acanfora v. Board of Education of Montgomery County, et al.*, 359 F. Supp.943 (1973); aff'd. 491 F. 2nd 498 (4th Cir. 1974); *cert denied*, 4198 U.S. 836 (1974); p.12).

Further, it was "also agreed that a child's parents...were much more major role models than any other teacher or textbook material so that the danger was minimal in terms of school-related influences"

(Uribe & Harbeck, 1991, p.12). Supporting the student in the sexual minority involves offering guidance and resources for students who have already made a difficult decision — there is little that can, or should, be done to change these students' minds.

Helping these students adjust is more of a challenge when one considers that GLB teenagers are often subjected to alarming amounts of homophobia and heterosexism in the schools. Weinberg (1972), as cited in Elia (1993), defined homophobia broadly to include fear and hatred directed at homosexuals both from peers and self. Subtle and blatant evidence of homophobia can be found in many sectors of the high school population. In fact, in some cases, that homophobia may be so deeply entrenched in the school's practices and atmosphere that GLB students are likely to feel that it cannot be challenged.

It can be argued that the school is not an appropriate place to address the issue of sexual identity. Many administrators and other school personnel thus have attempted to just ignore the situation. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that the schools have a responsibility to provide an environment that is most conducive to learning for *all* students.

Zero Tolerance

Protection from abuse and discrimination is not simply a courtesy that should be extended to GLB students. The responsibility to protect is also increasingly mandated by ethical codes and even state laws. While it is hoped that the inclusion of non-discrimination policies in the NASP code of ethics would be sufficient to demonstrate the importance of such actions, the additional pressure from state and federal levels (and the threat of loss of funding) might be more persuasive. Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (1996) has distributed literature indicating that "a public school, and school officials as individuals, may be held liable for monetary penalties under federal equal protection laws for failing to address anti-gay abuse of a student by other students" (p. 1).

Administrators who allow anti-gay abuse and harassment to go on may be comforted by their silence on the issue. By their silence, they effectively deny the problem of abuse against the student in the sexual minority. But educators' silence has far-reaching effects. O'Conor (1994) believes that educators' silence on the issue makes schools unsafe for GLB teens. Anderson (1994) concurs, writing that educators' and administrators' silence condemns GLB students to "years as psychosocial cripples" (p. 152).

Some are quick to blame the educational system for ignoring these students and their emotional and social needs. In some cases, this lack of attention to the issues of homophobia and heterosexism in the schools may be a result of the school personnels' ignorance of the problem. Anderson (1994) reports that "homophobia comes in many flavors. Some people are simply hateful, but most are not. The conspiracy of silence is not based on malice. There are too many good people in education for that to be true" (p. 151). Still, Buhrke (1989) charges that educators need to be aware of and work to overcome the "heterosexist bias" in public school education.

School administrations must be committed to finding abuses in the schools, and further, be committed to stopping them. Indeed, Uribe (1994) recommends that administrators have an unwavering policy of non-discrimination. Harassment should not be tolerated. Morrow (1993) suggests that sanctions be implemented to end lesbian and gay discrimination, harassment and violence in the schools. According to Buckel (1996), a responsible educator's goal is simple.

> *The goal is to stop the anti-gay abuse, whether it is name-calling at one end of the spectrum or physical assaults at the other end. Whatever the abuse, schools should show zero tolerance for it because every child deserves a safe environment, emotionally as well as physically, in which to get an education. To achieve that goal, you must work with those who have the power to do what they are supposed to do and stop the abuse (p. 3).*

Having been convinced of the importance of an active role in stopping anti-gay abuse, discrimination and harassment, school personnel must then develop plans to best reach this goal. As a member of the school community who typically has significant access to community as well as school resources, the school psychologist has an important opportunity to offer support to students in the sexual minority.

The School Psychologist

However, since school psychologists often have very limited opportunities for direct contact with general education students, their most powerful role in the school may be that of a resource person. School psychologists can influence staff and administrators to involve themselves in the provision of special services to GLB teens, and can provide a personal example of tolerance and acceptance. The school psychologist can provide resources for concerned parents. Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is an established support/information group specifically for those who care for a person in the sexual minority. A school psychologist who stays involved, committed and current to the needs of GLB teenagers can provide information about programs like PFLAG. In addition, school psychologists can provide support to teachers and other school personnel who are trying to deal with these students.

School psychologists have a responsibility, regardless of personal beliefs, to support these students. Treadway and Yoakam (1992) state that schools can help the GLB student who has decided to come out by creating an environment where diversity is respected.

This is no small task, and one which may not be entirely comfortable for the school psychologist. It may also involve help from other school personnel. But the school psychologist can play an important role in the healthy adjustment of GLB teens by providing an example of tolerance and acceptance. Reynolds and Koski (1994) indicate guidelines for school personnel to support GLB students, including the following statement: "The stance should not merely be one of tolerance; it should be one of support, acceptance, and affirmation" (p. 91). Morrow (1993) implies that acceptance of and tolerance for persons in the minority may be among the most valuable lessons taught in the schools.

It is a powerful and daunting task to help create a "homoaffirmative environment" for GLB teens. In order to provide an effective education for students in the sexual minority, there may be two important priorities. First, students must be kept safe. This involves watching for evidence of anti-gay abuse, discrimination and violence. When found, schools must be active in putting an end to it.

There are several ways to create a safer environment for GLB teens. They include (among others) the following:

> *Include questions related to sexual orientation and sexuality when assessing students' concerns, such as 'Do you have any concerns about your sexual orientation?' Challenge abuse, or derogatory terms such as 'faggot' or 'lezzie.' Establish a standard of conduct related to sexual orientation in the same way that racist or sexist terms are not acceptable in a classroom. Provide accurate, accessible information about sexuality. Establish outreach programs for young lesbian and gays at risk for depression, suicide, chemical addiction, and HIV transmission. Form a task force on violence against lesbian and gay people (Treadway & Yoakam, 1992, p. 353).*

What Else Can We Do?

Creating a safer environment for GLB teens, while vital, is only the first step. Having minimized distractions to the teen's healthy development, educators can then go about encouraging their personal growth. This is the second priority. In order to accomplish this goal, schools and school psychologists must offer unconditional support for these students in regard to their sexual orientation. Risky sexual behaviors need not be encouraged, nor should educators randomly engage in graphic discussions of such behaviors. Educators do, however, need to do their best to create an environment where GLB students feel they can voice their concerns and be heard without being judged. Uribe and Harbeck (1991) indicate that GLB adolescents need someone to talk to as much as, if not more than, students who are not in the sexual minority.

Offering support does not always include thwarting crises. Indeed, Treadway and Yoakam (1992) admit that "not all young gay men and lesbians need therapy. Most important, they need to have positive relationships with peers and understanding relationships with adult mentor figures" (p. 356). Anderson (1994) offers some ways that school psychologists can show support and encourage such supportive relationships. Among them he suggests posting of homoaffirmative literature prominently in school psychologist's office, paying close attention to the use of inclusive language, challenging antigay epithets and designating resource people in the schools for GLB students.

For some students in the sexual minority, the school psychologist may be the first person in their life who does not condemn their sexual identity. Lasser & Tharinger (1997) illustrate the importance of this support. More importantly, the school psychologist can take a leadership role in the school by voicing support and understanding of the needs of GLB students.

Gay/Straight Alliances: Transforming Pain into Pride

One concrete option for school psychologists, and one of the most effective techniques for showing support for GLB teens, is to be instrumental in establishing a support group, or gay/straight alliance, within the school. Gay/straight alliances are groups designed to bring heterosexual students and staff together with gay, lesbian and bisexual youth and staff, in an attempt to find common ground. Additionally, gay/straight alliances can be powerful in lobbying for positive change in the schools. NASP's *Position Statement on Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues* mandates that the school psychologist, in cooperation with APA and NASP, "shall take a leadership role in promoting societal and familial attitudes and behaviors that affirm the dignity and rights within educational environments of all lesbian, gay and bisexual youths" (NASP, p. 1).

Gay/straight alliances can be complicated to establish, but they have been shown to be effective (Uribe, 1994; Uribe & Harbeck, 1991) in providing a safe environment for GLB teens to air their concerns and find peer support. One of the first programs of its kind, "PROJECT 10" in California "was originally envisioned as an in-school counseling program, providing emotional support, information, resources and referrals to young people who identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual or who wanted accurate information on the subject of sexual orientation" (Uribe & Harbeck, 1991, p. 11). "PROJECT 10" was an unqualified success, prompting the establishment of similar programs in schools across the country.

It is certainly possible for school personnel to combat abuse and homophobia and, further, to provide opportunities for GLB youth to embrace their sexual identity and acclimate themselves into the

school community. Williams, Doyle, Taylor, & Ferguson (1992) interviewed students who had been members of school gay/straight alliances and support groups. One lesbian teen made the following statement about the effect the support group had on her self-esteem: "I learned that I'm good, I'm worth it, and my sexual identity is okay" (p. 156).

Self-respect and self-acceptance are the goals for most teens in the schools. Perhaps these, even over academics, are the primary concern of GLB students. Students in the sexual minority, because they often face vocal opposition, may need more assistance in developing a healthy self-image. School psychologists can provide support.

Be an Ally

Most practicing school psychologists would probably summarize their general goal in the schools as providing advocacy for the school's students. Beyond offering support to the GLB teen, the school psychologist can become an ally to these students. This involves an active commitment from the school psychologist, a commitment that is not to be taken lightly. It is not easy to align oneself with a group of oppressed people. Some school psychologists fear that to attach one's name to gay-friendly activities and/or groups is to open oneself up to harassment and speculation. This might be so. But it can be handled responsibly; and in the process, the school psychologist may begin to understand what it is like for an "out" student to function in a heterosexist school.

In short, students who fall into the sexual minority can be considered a population that is both needy and underserved. They face tasks that are unique to their sexual identity: tasks of assimilating their attitudes and behaviors and thriving in a sometimes blatantly heterosexist school. School psychologists cannot remove the obstacles that stand in students' paths. However, school psychologists can provide guidance for the most effective ways of hurdling or avoiding these obstacles in the first place. As Canaday (1987) optimistically indicates, "Those who have the interest and the courage can help gay young people face these tasks and mature into well-adjusted, competent adults" (p. 287). Throughout, GLB students deserve individual treatment based on their unique situations, just as any other student who faces challenges deserves individual consideration. School psychologists must be professional, committed and consistent in their support of GLB teens. Buhrke (1989) indicated that the truly ethical counselor makes an effort to respect the "worth, dignity, potential and uniqueness" of each student (p. 77)

Reynolds and Koski (1994) offer a challenge to school psychologists and other school personnel who may have the opportunity to impact the lives of GLB teens:

> *Being a visible supporter of LGB youth in the schools is often challenging and many barriers exist; however, the rewards can be endless if one imagines combatting the self-hatred and psychological difficulties of LGB students as well as challenging the ignorance, insensitivity, and sometimes hatred of their peers, teachers, administrators, and parents (p. 92).*

The challenge is not one that is easily undertaken. However, the personal and professional rewards for the school psychologist who takes it upon himself/herself to be an advocate for students in the sexual minority can be intensely satisfying.

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Jami Van Ryswyk describes herself as "an uppity woman from Iowa, in my first year of the Ed.S. [school psychology] program at Miami [Ohio]," where she serves as Alex Thomas' graduate assistant.

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Student Diversity in Development and Learning

More than ever before, students in today's schools come from a variety of racial, cultural, ethnic, experiential, and linguistic backgrounds. Their activities and talents must be acknowledged, supported, and integrated into their instructional programs. School psychologists can actively support this recognition. Experiential and linguistic differences can also result in learning difficulties and apparent disabilities. School psychologists must be effective in assisting schools in identifying what is needed for these students to succeed and what modifications are required to remedy such difficulties. They must be able to recognize their own sometimes subtle racial, class, gender, and cultural biases, and the ways in which their (and others') biases and backgrounds influence their decision making, instruction, behavior, and ultimately long-term outcomes for students.

From School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice II, p. 8

Gay Families with Children

by Cynthia Asprodites, Ph.D.
Alameda (CA) Unified School District

Background

As we consider the increasing diversity of our student population, the topic of children with lesbian and gay parents is typically neglected. Their families tend to be rendered invisible in the culture and consciousness of our schools by societal prejudice. If our schools are to serve *all* students, then it is imperative that educators become aware of issues relevant to lesbian and gay parents and their children and develop strategies for addressing their needs within the context of the school setting.

Gay Families: It is estimated that, in the U. S., there are 1 to 5 million lesbian mothers, 1 to 3 million gay fathers, and 6 to 14 million children with gay or lesbian parents. Like families headed by heterosexual parents, lesbian and gay parents and their children are a diverse group. Many children with gay or lesbian parents were born in the context of heterosexual relationships, typically a prior marriage that dissolves when the father "comes out" as gay and/or when the mother "comes out" as a lesbian. There are also increasing numbers of lesbians and gay men, both single and coupled, who are choosing to become parents. Many lesbians become pregnant through donor insemination, using sperm from either known or unknown donors. Legal adoption, permissable in many states, is another venue. Parenting options pursued by gay men include adoption, donor insemination with the intention of co-parenting with the child's mother, and surrogacy with the intention of raising a child singly or with a gay male partner. While the term "gay family" is no more definitive than "American family", what is common to all gay families is the vulnerability to prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation and supported by cultural, legal and judicial sanctions.

Summary of Research: Research on lesbian and gay parents and their children is in an emergent stage. The available empirical data dispel false assumptions about gay and lesbian parents relative to their psychological adjustment and parenting skills, the effect of disclosure of their sexuality to their children, and their influence on the sexual orientation and psychological adjustment of their children. The research findings are clear: there is *no* evidence to suggest that the psychosocial development of children raised by lesbian and gay parents, relative to their peers raised by heterosexual parents, is compromised in any respect. These children are, however, more likely to experience harassment in school because of societal judgments about their parents' sexual orientation. Thus, the difficulties of growing up in a lesbian or gay household are linked not to the nature of parents' relationships, but rather to the homophobia and heterosexism pervasive in our society and tolerated in our schools. A number of specific findings are offered by the accumulating research:

- Children of a lesbian or gay parent are no more likely to define themselves as homosexual than children of heterosexual parents, nor are they any more likely to display sex role preferences. Children of a lesbian or gay parent follow typical developmental patterns of acquiring sex role concepts and sex-typed behaviors.
- Children of gay parents who have experienced marital turmoil face similar difficulties common to children of divorce.
- As children enter adolescence, there is a greater likelihood that they will experience peer harassment about their parents' sexual identity and engage in a variety of self-protective mechanisms.
- There are indications that children find it easier to deal with issues raised by having lesbian and gay parents if they learn of parental sexual orientation during childhood rather than in adolescence.
- Existing data suggest the value of a supportive milieu in which parental sexual orientation is accepted by other significant adults, and in which children have contact with peers in similar circumstances.

Challenges Facing Children with Gay Parents: School is typically the first place that children become aware of the societal prejudice against their parents: they hear the insults that describe their mothers and fathers in the schoolyard. The most common challenge confronting children raised by lesbian and gay parents involves fear of rejection and harrassment and coping with feelings of isolation. This is particularly true during adolescence when children are likely to fear that others may assume that they, too, are homosexual. The invisibility of gay and lesbian parents supports a climate of silence for children as well, making knowledge about other children inaccessible. Children often report the sentiment, "There's no one else like me."

Relevant to the school setting, the psychosocial needs of children from gay and lesbian families primarily involve issues of inclusion and safety. Children need to feel included, to have their families recognized and their personal experiences validated, as reflected in the language of the classroom and the culture of the school. They also need to feel safe from harassment and discrimination in the school setting. This is, of course, true for all children in our schools, though the needs of children in gay families, analogous to children from other marginalized groups, are underscored by a climate of social intolerance.

Strategies for Responding to the Needs of Children with Gay Parents

By responding to the needs of children raised in gay families, educators can create inclusive and safe environments for all children. Strategies to achieve this goal include countering misconceptions about homosexuality with accurate information, challenging practices which sanction the invisibility of gay members of the school community, and recognizing and confronting incidents of intolerance and harrassment without equivocation. A number of general recommendations are discussed below with a listing of specific interventions at the end of this resource guide.

Personal and Professional Development: A first step toward being responsive to the needs of children in gay families is a personal commitment to examine one's own attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality. Become informed about issues related to sexual orientation by reading and attending lectures and workshops. Accurate information is essential in dispelling false assumptions and misconceptions. It is important to state that, should personal prejudices and/or religious beliefs about homosexuality be in conflict with professional expectations, those attitudes must be set aside or overcome in order to assure equity for all students. It can be argued that educators have a moral responsibility to make school safe for all students and to teach students to be critical of all forms of oppression.

Working with Families and Children: It is very important for educators to communicate understanding and acceptance in meeting with parents. If parents are seeking consultation, issues of oppression of sexual minorities and concerns about their children may be central mental health concerns necessitating some affirmative response from the teacher or administrator. If parents are seeking consultation about the learning or social/emotional needs of their child, be cautious not to attribute the child's presenting problem to the parent's sexual orientation.

Gay and lesbian parents consciously assess psychological safety and the possible negative consequences of disclosure about their sexuality. Be conscious that race, religion, culture, and socioeconomic status are influential factors in parents' decisions to disclose. Should parents disclose the nature of their relationship, then issues of confidentiality should be discussed. Because the process of coming out and assuming a gay or lesbian identity is frequently a disruptive experience in a parent's life, parents may share feelings of isolation and seek information about gay and lesbian parent support groups.

It is also important to keep in mind that some children are faced with a parent struggling with AIDS and that dealing with societal prejudice around homosexuality is compounded by ignorance about AIDS. Working with families around these issues demands sensitivity and requires that teachers and administrators become well-informed about AIDS.

Development of Equitable School-wide Policies and Practices: A microcosm of society, schools mirror society's prejudices as well as its values. A critical first step in combatting the manifestations of homophobia is to recognize and interrupt incidents of intolerance and harrassment. Because homosexuality is such a charged issue, teachers are often reluctant to confront children who engage in anti-gay name-calling to intimidate other children. Homophobic remarks should be as unacceptable as any racial or ethnic slur. Misinformation and stereotypes must also be confronted. Educators can model how to respond to anti-gay incidents and verbal assaults whenever they occur, including insensitive remarks by a colleague or parent. Administrators can encourage honest discussion of anti-gay bias and explore ways to make their schools safe and more inclusive of all children and their families. School psychologists can provide resource materials and serve as a referral source for school staff and parents by providing names of gay community agencies or individual mental health service providers who are gay sensitive.

Educators should encourage the development of equitable school-wide policies. For example, they can encourage schools to set up clear guidelines for behavior which includes name-calling based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, etc. and enforce consequences for violation of these norms. Sexual orientation can be included in the non-discrimination language of school policies applying to students, faculty, and staff. Heterosexist bias in language and policies including forms should be eliminated.

Curriculum Development: The philosophy that supports the inclusion of multicultural perspectives throughout the curriculum applies to gay and lesbian issues as well. We should encourage inclusion of formal and informal education about non- traditional families into the curriculum, including gay and lesbian families. The issue is visibility: to remain silent is a form of collusion in the oppression of lesbians and gay men in the culture of the school. When teachers present age-appropriate materials that remove the stigma attached to lesbians and gay men, the incidence of homophobic slurs is likely to decrease. Educators need to feel comfortable using the language, saying words like "lesbian" and "gay". Talking about gay and lesbian families in the classroom means recognizing the existence of a family structure which reflects the reality of some of our students. In talking about different kinds of families, children learn about diversity, tolerance, and respect for differences.

Note

- ***Homophobia*** is defined as fear or hatred of same-sex closeness.
- ***Heterosexism*** is defined as the assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual. It is the belief that heterosexuality is a superior way to live and love. In most countries, heterosexism is supported by the legal and judicial systems. Homophobia and heterosexism do not exist in a vacuum, separate from other forms of oppression in this society. All the *-isms*, that is, racism, sexism, classism, anti-Semitism, and heterosexism, are connected, linked by the existence of power imbalances, by a pervasive system of exclusion based on group identity.

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Videos

Both My Moms' Names' are Judy. Lesbian and Gay Parents Association, 6705 California St. #1, San Francisco, CA 94121; (415) 387-9886.

It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in School, Women's Educational Media, 2180 Bryant St. #203, San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 641-4616.

Organizations

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network) 121 W. 27th St., Suite 804, New York, NY 10001. (212) 727-0135. <*www.GLSEN.org*> *GLSEN is a national organization that brings together gay and straight educators working to end homphobia in our schools.*

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Issues in Education: An ASCD Network, P. O. Box 15043, Ann Arbor, MI 48108.

Lesbian and Gay Parents Association: 6705 California St. #1, San Francisco, CA 94121; (415) 387-9886.

COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere): 2300 Market St. #165, San Francisco, CA 94114; (415) 861-KIDS *This organization issues a newsletter and organizes social activities and support groups for Bay Area school-aged children and youth.*

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD): P. O. Box 931763, Hollywood, CA 90093; (213) 463-3632. *GLAAD has developed a curriculum to help teach students about homophobia.*

Project of the Study of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Schools. Dr. Arthur Lipkin, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 210 Longfellow Hall, Cambridge, MA 02138; (617) 491-5301.

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Gender Equity Day: A Role for School Psychologists

by Kevin P. Dwyer, NCSP, NASP President-Elect

From elementary school through graduate school, sexism shortcuts girls (and boys too!). Gender bias in teaching and in textbooks is commonplace, according to researchers Myra and David Sadker of American University, Washington, DC. This award winning research was spearheaded during the 1990s by Myra Sadker, who devoted decades of her life to reducing gender bias in both schools and communities. In her prime of life, Professor Myra Sadker succumbed to treatments for breast cancer and died in 1995. Her work continues through the Foundation in her name and *A Day for Gender Equity: Myra Sadker Day, March 5, 1998,* which would have been her 55th birthday. Her work also continues through Professor David Sadker's advocacy, research and teacher training, helping prepare teachers to modify their teaching techniques to rid their classrooms of this insidious bias against girls. The Sadkers' research also provides examples of effective classroom observation techniques to determine unintentional teacher bias.

Research, Experience Find Unequal Treatment

Much of this effort began with Myra Sadker's personal experience as a doctoral candidate. She and her husband, both doctoral candidates at the University of Massachusetts, would present an idea for innovative teacher preparation and their professors would acknowledge only David Sadker as the idea generator. The real idea person, a woman, was invisible. Myra published her first teacher-training textbook, *Sexism in School and* Society, in 1973 and the team of Myra and David followed with the *Sex Equity Handbook for Schools* and *Beyond Pictures and Pronouns.*

In the beginning, neither of them thought that her awareness of bias would later win them honorary doctorates, an American Education Research Association Award in 1992, and national recognition on the *Today Show, Dateline, Oprah* and National Public Radio's *All Things Considered.* A whole series of *Doonsbury,* where the young daughter's skills are ignored by her teachers, was based on the Sadkers' research. Their 1994 book, *Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls,* was the result of their two decades of research conducted inside classrooms, documenting subtle ways teachers show bias against girls. The research used observations of how teachers asked questions, attended and provided direct instruction to both boys and girls. (See Mardyks, 1995 review.)

From grade school through graduate school, from inner city classrooms to those in rural communities, Myra Sadker and her husband found gender discrimination in instruction as well as in textbooks and sports funding. She found that boys, when compared to girls, receive much more attention and receive more frequent "active, direct and precise instruction." Boys, with stiff arms raised and hands waving, are more frequently called upon to respond to questions and are given more teacher time, regardless of their answers, when compared to girls. For both good and bad reasons, for the right answer and the wrong behavior, teachers focus on boys. Girls, they found, are ignored when raising their hands, rewarded less for correct answers and not assisted when in error, when compared to boys. Girls are relegated to gender stereotypes of passivity and compliance. Furthermore, their learning problems and disabilities are discounted as are their cognitive and leadership abilities. (See Winchell, 1995, for a summary of a research project by fourteen-year-old based on the Sadkers' work.)

Myra was my friend. My wife Eileen and I were with her family when she was rushed to intensive care, a gutsy human being, aggresively fighting cancer. We had some challenging discussions. I once proudly told her that most school psychologists are women (about 69%) and she said in rapid fire, "Why are all the special ed kids boys? Why are most university department heads men? Why don't emotionally troubled girls get the help they need?" The barrage of questions came from a deep knowledge of real world facts and a deep commitment to awaken in each of us the need to do more to remove painful bias. When Myra and David appeared on television or radio, they timed their responses to equalize their time, frequently responding to the host out of turn to ensure equal time. Their research assistants clocked their equal time within seconds. Most people believed that Myra spoke more than David. David has said, "When a woman gets equal time, whether in a classroom or during an interview, it looks like she's getting too much. We have to change our perception."

The Sadkers (David continues their work) use experiential training, videotapes and guided practice to change this unintentional teaching bias. They also worked on public policy, sometimes meeting severe criticism and being labeled as "left-wing liberals" because they threatened the status quo. Their work continues to influence public and private schools, including training for the staff of the Citadel and other institutions that have, reluctantly, sexually integrated their programs.

Myra Sadker Day

Myra Sadker Day for gender equity was designated to help groups and individuals focus their energies on increasing equity. Since school psychologists are in classrooms, consulting with teachers and parents and evaluating children's needs, it is hoped that many will become *Myra Sadker Advocates*, as have other child advocates. For example, the *Boys and Girls Clubs of America* are enlisting staff participation. The *American Association of University Women* is endorsing suggested activities. Their efforts will support a range of activities including: working with adults and youth to eliminate gender bias in language, reading non-sexist stories to children, having poster contests and awards for promoting gender equity, doing presentations about gender equity in schools or to a PTA, helping men learn effective parenting skills, and checking norms on tests and diagnostic instruments. Key to this concept is that each *Advocate* will be encouraged to be creative, to develop unique equity activities that reflect the interests and capabilities of their community. Pooled together by the Foundation, they will become part of a national effort accomplishing these goals.

Over 100 different suggested activities have been generated by national groups, colleges and individuals. Many "fit" school psychology, including: examine class enrollment in advanced classes; compile a list of "non-traditional heroes;" submit a public service announcement to your local radio station or newspaper about gender equity; check your schools for equity in sports (one component of Title IX); team with teachers to talk about fairness in class behaviors; discuss gender-bashing music with a teenage group; share your own experiences around bias and what you did to overcome them; talk to groups about the offensiveness of sexist jokes; work with teen parents on child rearing; work with counselors on expanding non-sexist career and college choices; discuss special education referral patterns with your Title IX coordinator; identify emerging female leaders and support their appointments; submit research or grant proposals for gender equity; research standardized test data by gender; train staff to eliminate sexist language; invite non-traditional workers into classrooms.

Participate in *Myra Sadker Day* by making a commitment to do something special on March 5, 1999 to celebrate gender equity, helping make it a reality in your school, community, family or workplace. Keep gender equity in mind as a component of your personal/professional responsibility. The Myra Sadker Foundation would very much like to know what you plan to do on March 5th of every year, be it a single event or the start of a long-term project. Please send your advocacy commitment to the foundation at: <*DSadker@aol.com*> or write to the Myra Sadker Foundation: Suite 300, 1401 Rockville Pike, Rockville MD 20852. The Foundation would like every school system to have an activity. If you have any questions, please e-mail the Foundation or call: (301)738-7113.

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We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality; tied in a single garment of destiny .. . I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way the world is made. I didn't make it that way, but this is the interrelated structure of reality.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

From the book,
Teaching Tolerance
by Sara Bullard (1996, p. 167).

An Anti-Bias Approach to Early Childhood Education

by Ann L. Boyd
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Overview

By the year 2000, it is predicted that one out of three Americans will be a person of color and at least fifty American cities will be predominately non-white. As our society becomes increasingly more complex and diverse we must prepare our children to grow up with the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to live competently within this diverse world. A child's sense of identity and awareness of differences begins very early in the preschool years. Research in this area suggests that children learn by observing differences and similarities among people and by absorbing the spoken and unspoken messages about those differences.

A comprehensive curriculum approach that will help empower children to develop an awareness, respect for and appreciation of self and others is reflected in an Anti-bias Curriculum. Anti-bias curriculum incorporates the positive intent of multi-cultural curricula while expanding to include other forms of bias, stereotypes and misinformation. Anti-bias curricula not only address race and ethnicity but also include gender, language, religious diversity, sexual orientation, physical and mental ableness and social and economic class. In contrast to some multi-cultural curricula, anti-bias curriculum is a proactive, problem solving approach that is integrated into all aspects of existing curriculum and the everyday environment. This lessens the likelihood of becoming a "tourist curriculum," an approach that can trivialize and patronize a culture by focusing on differences and on surface aspects of their celebrations and artifacts.

The goals of anti-bias curricula are to "enable every child to construct a knowledgeable, confident self identity; to develop a comfortable, empathetic and just interaction with diversity; and to develop critical thinking and the skills for standing up for oneself in the face of injustice" (Derman-Sparks, 1989, p. ix). Anti-bias curriculum recognizes not only the need of each child to be seen as a valued individual but also the importance of each child's ability to view others in the same vein.

What Can I Do as a Teacher?

Examine Your Own Biases and Explore Your Life History

This very first step is often the most difficult and yet it is also the most crucial aspect of an anti-bias approach. Children's learning style, values, self concept and social competence are influenced by the culture, opinions and attitudes of their family and other primary caregivers. By the time they reach kindergarten, children are very aware of differences and much of this knowledge appears to be transmitted through family and the media. The role of the early childhood teacher is crucial and it is essential that teachers be actively reevaluating their own biases and disposition.

Keep Yourself Informed, Do Research and Acquire Accurate Information

Children are as vulnerable to omissions as they are to inaccuracies and stereotypes. Stereotypes can be nourished by lack of information. Be sure to provide them with accurate, non-biased information about all groups. It is not the differences themselves that cause problems but how people perceive and respond to these differences. Recognize and acknowledge all forms of diversity.

Children Need to Experience Diversity Outside Their Immediate Environment

Do not be limited to the diversity within the classroom or the community. Engage in conversations about diversity. Find similarities between people and focus on what people have in common, not just what there is between them that is different.

Everyone Has a Culture, Not Just Those Who Appear Different

Children who are taught to appreciate and understand their own culture learn to understand other cultures in the process. Every family has its own traditions and style.

Promote Positive Self-concept

Nurture the self-esteem, self-worth and sense of dignity of each child and their families.

Be Accepting of All Children

Expect to Run Into Resistance

Anti-bias curriculum is a process that will continually evolve and grow. These changes require courage and risk-taking. Form a support group with other teachers who are implementing anti-bias curriculum. Share ideas and problem solve together. As with bias, resistance often results from lack of

knowledge. Explain to those who are resistant why you are implementing the anti-bias curriculum.

Examine, Challenge and Work to Eliminate Institutional Bias

Anti-bias curriculum is also about social change. Continually examine policies and practices not only in the classroom but in the school and community at large.

What Strategies Can I Use in My Classroom?

Evaluate the Classroom Environment Regarding its Messages for Diversity.

Look critically at all the materials in the classroom.

Create a Picture File

Include a fair balance of images of different races, differently abled people doing a variety of activities, different ages of people performing different tasks, diversity of family styles, and men and women in nontraditional roles. Display these pictures around the room. Display photographs of the children, their families, people within the community, and the staff.

Reevaluate the Books in the Classroom

Make sure the books reflect diversity of gender roles, racial and cultural backgrounds, special needs and abilities, a range of occupations, a range of ages, a range of incomes, varying lifestyles and different languages. If biased books are a part of your library, use them as a teaching tool.

Music

Expose the children to music of various styles and cultures. Include jazz, reggae, classical, Native American , Indian classical , children's lullabies, music for movement and dancing, and music for singing as just a few ideas. Play some of the different types of music during free choice time, not just during music time.

Art Materials

Include skin tone crayons, markers and paints as well as multi-cultural paper. Allow children to look into mirrors when making self portraits. Encourage the children to make pictures of each other as well as their families. Note if the children include their glasses, wheelchairs, etc. in their pictures.

Housekeeping and Dramatic Play

Include dolls that represent a fair balance of all the major groups in the United States. Try supplementing commercial dolls with homemade dolls. Have the children make some dolls as a project. Include tools used by people with various special needs such as crutches, braces or glasses in the housekeeping area. Create play rooms other than a kitchen, such as work rooms with tools.

Manipulatives

These should also depict diversity in race, gender, physical abilities and occupations. Take care when ordering materials to avoid stereotypical images.

Active Problem-solving

Learn what ideas the children have about diversity. Ask the children questions and present problem solving activities and role playing. Provide honest, accurate responses to the children and help teach them how to recognize and deal with injustice. Learning about diversity and equity should permeate all activities. These conversations are particularly effective during circle time but "teachable moments" occur throughout the day. Jump right in if you hear children carrying on a biased conversation and help them explore the realities of what they are saying.

Inform, Engage and Involve Parents

Organize a parent meeting and inform the parents about why anti-bias is a part of the curriculum and how it is being implemented. Plan a parent education session about how children develop identity and attitudes. Most importantly, invite the parents to participate. Parents are an invaluable resource and can help bring the strengths of their unique families into the classroom. Remember how difficult it may be for some parents to take that first step and look at their own biases. It is important not to alienate those parents who may have more difficulty accepting the anti-bias principles.

Resource

Derman-Sparks, L., & A. B. C. Task Force. (1989). *Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children.* Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children. (Accompanying video is also available from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009)

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Working with Native American Students: Guidelines for Special Educators

by Audrey Anderson and Andrea Canter, NCSP

The U.S. census (1990) indicates that there are approximately 1.9 million Native Americans living throughout the United States. This is considered a low estimate, and more likely there are closer to 2 million Indigenous people within the U.S. population. Representing slightly more than 1% of the total U.S. population, there are 550 Federally recognized Native American Nations speaking over 200 different Native American languages. With many different dialects among the same Native groups of people within the same Nations of people, the Native American should not be viewed as a homogeneous population as the culture is so varied.

The Need for Nontraditional Approaches

A number of factors dictate a nontraditional approach to working with the Native American child: Among Indigenous populations are some of the lowest incomes with earnings well below the poverty level. It has been well documented that the level of poverty is the best predictor of school success for all populations. Also among this population are many people who have not had a good educational experience and do not trust the educational system to address their children's needs. This belief has a very long history among the Native cultures.

Approximately 22% of Native Americans live full-time on reservations and trust lands. Another part of the Native population goes between the two cultures. Some live on the reservations and in major cities, returning to the reservations and going back to the city. This creates a situation where the Native American child/adolescent may speak what could be called a reservation dialect, combined with English, and the child may not be proficient in either language. In planning intervention and assessment, it would be best practice to determine 1) if the child speaks a Native language; 2) if English was the first language learned; 3) what language is used in the home; and 4) if the child is fluent in the Native language. If the child spoke the Native language first and is not proficient in English, the child should be considered as an ESL student – English is a *second language* for this child.

Working with the Native American Student and Family

When one works with a Native family, it would be advisable to understand some of the social mores of their culture. As the population is so varied, it would be very difficult to address all Native issues. When one takes into consideration the number of recognized Nations of Native American people in the U.S., it would be impossible to address each group of Native people's needs within the educational system. However, there are some common threads across this culture as in any other culture that can be addressed to some degree:

Meeting with the family: When having a meeting with the Native American family, it is common to have other family members present during the meeting. Because each family member is responsible for this child, the group of family members should be included when providing information to the staff. One should address the whole family as the "parents," as it is considered bad manners not to follow this procedure. Similarly, the staff should give all members of the family the information about the interventions and assessment process, the expected outcome of the data gathered, and how the student's needs will be met in the educational system.

The dominant culture will address individuals by their first name. However, this is seen as disrespect toward the Native family. One should address each member by his or her formal name and title, such as "Mr.," " Mrs.," or "Ms." One needs to wait until the individual tells you that it is okay to address him by his first name. The dominant culture may not mean disrespect by addressing the individuals by their first name, but this is seen as putting down someone that the dominant culture may deem to be below their social stature. Never use a nickname or an abbreviation of the given name. It is appropriate to address an unmarried person as "Mr." or "Mrs." when you know that they share a common home. The term "blanket" marriage is regarded as a binding obligation to support and maintain the family unit.

It is considered bad manners to start a meeting without first socially visiting with the family. Time factors may put pressure on the school professionals to skip this step. However, it would be very beneficial to all to allow time for a short period of social interaction with the family to help build their trust. The business of the meeting will evolve out of the social interaction– everyone at the meeting knows the agenda. Refreshments are always served in Native meetings and it is traditional to serve guests that come to one's home. For a Native family to offer refreshment when a staff member comes to the home is a sign of trust and respect. This courtesy needs to be returned in an effort to demonstrate respect for the family. It is seen as very bad manners to refuse refreshment when it is offered. To do so can be seen as a rejection of the home or family.

Correcting or redirecting: When a Native American child has broken a rule or is acting out, do not address the issues in front of others in the classroom. It would be beneficial for the teacher or staff member to wait or leave the room with the child before discussing the issues. To correct a child before the other students is seen as shaming the child, as disrespect for the individual. It is very difficult for the staff members to regain the child's trust. If the shaming continues, staff may find that they are disrespected in return, which may escalate the undesired behaviors.

Eye Contact: Another situation that may be very difficult for some staff to understand is the lack of direct eye contact. When talking to an adult, the child in some Native cultures may not look adults in the eye. This may cause some members of the dominant culture to believe that the child is not telling the truth or is avoiding the issue. This is not the case. In some cultures, the Native American student would be demonstrating complete disrespect for the adult and their culture if they looked directly into the eye of the adult when being corrected. Therefore, do not demand direct eye contact from the child. The child may become very uncomfortable with the staff person— it is difficult to ask a member from a different culture to forget all the training that they have had and to disregard what is considered the "norm" for their culture.

The above information is only a small sample of what is considered to be good manners among the Native American population. One should take into consideration that disregarding the customs and expectations of another culture may lead to an undesired response from the family and the child.

Pre-Referral Intervention

By Federal and state rules, each child in the pre-referral intervention process must be given interventions that are considered to address the child's needs in the classroom and/or in other areas of the building. The staff should have some understanding of the culture of the students with whom they work. The interventions should address the child's culture and should reflect the information needed to specifically plan the interventions. Such information is best gathered through consultation with the family; the process should be determined by the Team members and should be individualized to address each child's needs, not a "one size fits all" process.

Pre-referral intervention is essential to address behavioral as well as academic concerns. The intervention plan must be aimed at changing the target behaviors in question within the school environment. Usually, the intervention process takes place over a prolonged period of time. The intervention strategies must be measurable to help determine what works and what does not work with the referred child. Children who present behavioral concerns will change the agenda frequently. What works today won't work the next day. The intervention plan may need to be changed frequently. When working with the Native American child, try to discuss the issues with the child when the two of you can be alone. This will be difficult to do at times, but the benefits may be worth the effort. A safe environment is very important.

When the interventions have been tried but don't have the desired outcome, the child is typically moved into the formal assessment process. The team should have some understanding of the culture relative to referral concerns. What is the child's learning capacity and style? Native American children may see a whole as a whole, and not as parts of a whole. They may learn best by demonstration of exactly how the parts are put together to make a whole. This includes all academic skill building. Remember that many of these children have had bad experiences throughout their lives, and the staff needs to take a careful look at what the child may need to feel secure in the academic environment.

Assessment Issues

Many Native American children have been misdiagnosed by relying on the Intelligence Quotient and published personality tests to determine the child's needs. While many in the dominant culture believe that a process of determining disability and implementing a learning program should fit all children, this assumption has failed with other cultures.

Intellectual assessment: Many of the procedures used to assess minority students in the past have resulted in the misdiagnosis of borderline intelligence or mentally impaired functioning. The culture in which the child was raised will impact that child's response to test items, creating a situation where the child's response is far afield from the intent of the test developer and resulting in a large percentage of responses that do not conform to what the test purports to measure. Such tools might provide useful information but obtained scores should not be considered valid or used for classification.

A test might be considered biased if a specific population's test scores are consistently below the population on which the test was normed. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Third Edition, Stanford Binet-IV and other instruments that are classified as "intelligence tests" do not measure the same kind of intelligence in other cultures as they do in the dominant culture. The instrument is measuring the acquired knowledge that the individual has obtained throughout her educational history about the dominant culture, but the child's value system may not correspond to that of the test developers. While the information gathered about the Native child during the standardized assessment process does not measure the "intellectual level" or "learning potential" of the child, these data can be useful as a measure of the child's learned information about another culture.

Behavioral/Personality Assessment: Published personality assessment tools generally do not represent the Native American culture, as the family's value

system may not correlate with that of the test author(s). To imply that the child is "malfunctioning" to some degree within the dominant culture, based upon a score or standard interpretation of a personality measure, is erroneous, to say the least. This conclusion is based upon the differences between the two cultures, the differences in value systems, economical/social status, gender and birth order. For example, there is no word for "time" in most Native American cultures. Time is seen as present and not something in the past or future. Most everything will happen in its own time– this is a deep belief among Native American cultures. Further, Native people tend to see things in a spiritual manner. This belief in the spirit world is very strong throughout the Indigenous population.

When assessing the Native child's behavior difficulties, gathering comprehensive information is very important. Very often, a behavior checklist or rating scale can help the team to focus on major issues and plan further assessment and intervention. Before asking a Native parent to complete a checklist or rating scale, one should check to see if there is any thing that could be considered offensive to the Native parent. For example, a question about the child's church participation could be problematic as the Native American religion is a way of life and many do not attend a formal church. The whole world is viewed as the "church" for much of the Indigenous population. Everything on Mother Earth is sacred.

Rather than rely on published and standardized measures, it would be best practice to conduct observations, review school history and examine how the child interacts with his/her peer group. For students with challenging behaviors, a functional behavior assessment should be included to help identify environmental factors that influence the target behaviors. The family history may be difficult to obtain, as the family may not trust the system. To ask direct questions of the parent(s) is seen as intrusive, and to be intrusive is regarded as very bad manners. Although the staff person may only wish to be helpful, this may not be viewed as helpful by the family. It is very critical that school personnel attempt to build trust with the family (see above). This can be greatly supported through collaboration with Native American advocates from the community, local agencies or the school district who are already known to the Native families.

Assessing achievement: Published achievement tests appear to be less biased with nonwhite populations, as they are measuring the academic skills of the child– basic skills that all children need to have to be successful in school. The person administering the achievement test may want to look at the child's math, reading and written language skills; the practitioner can administer the social studies and science sections of the achievement battery to gather more information. However, all involved in assessment should use some caution when measuring the child's level of "general information" – what is viewed as important to another culture. The child may not have enough information about the dominant culture, resulting in low scores. When scores are consistently low for one population versus another, that test might be biased for specific cultures. Using Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) procedures will give the team a good idea of the child's performance level in his/her basic academic skills. It is imperative that the child's basic academic needs are addressed before going on to building higher level skills.

Comments About Norming Populations

The intelligence test, checklists and achievement tests are usually normed on the general population of the United States. And, usually, not all of the states are included the norming population. The population information used to determine distributions for norming samples is based upon the U.S. Census statistics; thus, there are very few Native Americans in the norming populations. This is not to say that the test instruments cannot be used with the Native child, but the practitioner needs to be careful in interpreting the test results. One should remember that, when using an instrument designed for the general population with another culture, the instrument may not be measuring what the test designer(s) intended the instrument to measure, but may be measuring what the child knows about the dominant culture. Where the child lands on the continuum, when compared to the US population, may not be reliable. The test will not accurately measure how well the child functions in his/her own culture. Additional cautions about test norms apply to all populations– practitioners should be wary of older measures with outdated norms.

Suggested Procedures

There are too many instruments used for assessment to address the merits of every one of them. The instruments that are mentioned here are commonly used in school settings and are only *suggested* for use with the Native child/adolescent. Every referred child is an individual, unique in her own way. The assessment should reflect the child's needs and not rely on quantitative data. Cautions regarding item bias, representativeness of norming samples, date of norms, and cultural relevance should be considered prior to using or interpreting any of these procedures.

Additionally, cautions regarding the assessment of students whose first language is not English should be followed with some Native children. Ideally, an interpreter fluent in the child's first language will be available to assist in the assessment and in communicating with family members. Where this is not a realistic option, educators should adhere to best practice procedures for ESL and Bilingual students (e.g., Lopez & Goupal-McNichol, 1997; Hamayan & Damico, 1991).

Recommendations: intellectual measures: The

Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children-Third Edition, Stanford Binet Fourth Edition, Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Battery and Differential Ability Scales are acceptable instruments to use when assessing the Native American child. However, the practitioner should understand the limits of the test for the Native individual. The Indigenous population as a whole are not usually a highly verbal people. Therefore, the child's verbal skills may not be sufficient to do well on the tasks that require good English fluency. The nonverbal abstract reasoning of the individual may be better developed over verbal skills and can be an indication of the child's overall learning potential; therefore the use of nonverbal measures (C-TONI, Ravens, Leiter-R, etc.) are recommended.

Recommendations: behavior/personality: The practitioner should not rely on a standardized or projective personality measure with Native American students. The value system of the general population is not representative of the Native population. Also, it is suggested that the practitioner not use a peer rating scale or sociometric procedure for the Native American student. A peer rating scale can be very biased in either direction for any student, and can be particularly biased in classrooms where the Native student is in the minority. The Behavioral Assessment System for Children (BASC), Achenbach Child Behavior Checklists, Behavior Evaluation Scale-2 (BES-2) and Behavior Emotional Rating Scale (BERS) (a strength-based measure) offer relatively objective measures and may provide useful data if scores are interpreted cautiously.

The recommended primary sources of behavioral information for the Native American student are direct observation in relevant settings and interviews with family, staff and student, keeping in mind the suggestions noted above for securing family trust and cooperation. The interview process can provide information about the student and family history, expectations for behavior and suggestions for improving the student's performance. It further provides an invaluable opportunity for involving parents in their children's education and for educators to learn more about this much-neglected American culture.

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Material for this article was originally prepared for inclusion in the Minneapolis Public Schools' "Procedures for Reducing Bias in Special Education Assessments" (1998) and is adapted from an article to be published in the March, 1998 issue of Communiqué. *Audrey Anderson, M.A., is a school psychologist for the Minneapolis Public Schools and one of very few Native American school psychologists in the upper midwest. Andrea Canter, Ph.D., NCSP, is the Editor of* Communiqué *and Lead Psychologist for the Minneapolis Public Schools.*

Tolerance and Diversity: Resources for Parents, Educators and Students

by Deborah Crockett, Ph.D., NCSP
Fayette Board of Education

These resources are intended to supplement instruction in school and other settings. The ultimate goal is to increase the understanding, acceptance and awareness of diversity in our daily lives. This bibliography serves as a sample of resources available for professionals, parents and students.

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The National Association of School Psychologists represents over 21,000 school psychologists and related professionals throughout the United States and in 25 foreign countries. Founded in 1969, it is the world's largest organization of school psychologists.

NASP credentials school psychologists through its Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) program and is a leading publisher of books for school psychologists, parents and educational professionals. Every year it holds an annual convention that is the world's largest gathering of school psychologists

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